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THE NOVELS, TALES AND LETTERS
OF
PROSPER MÉRIMÉE

EDITED BY PROF. GEORGE SAINTSBURY, M.A.

COMPLETE IN EIGHT VOLUMES

THE DOUBLE MISTAKE

SOULS IN PURGATORY
THE VENUS OF ILLE

Translated by
WILLIAM M. ARNOLD
OLIVE EDWARDS PALMER AND
EMILY MARY WALLER

With Illustrations by
GUSTAVE FRAIPONT, A. BRAMTOT
AND J. J. ARANDA

NEW YORK PHILADELPHIA
FRANK S. HOLBY
MCMVI

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THE DOUBLE MISTAKE

Zagala, mas que las flores blanca, rubia y ojos verdes,
Si piensas seguir amores piérdete bien, pues te pierdes! *

I

JULIE DE CHAVERNY had been married for about six years, and for nearly five years and six months she had had her eyes open not only to the impossibility of loving her husband, but also to the difficulty of merely giving him a place in her esteem.

This husband was not boorish. He was neither stupid nor foolish. Still there may have been, perhaps, a mingling of all those qualities in him. If she had recalled the past she might have remembered that once upon a time she had found him pleasant: but now he bored her. Everything about him seemed to her repulsive. His way of eating, of drinking coffee, of speaking, gave her nervous shudders. They seldom met or talked together except at table; but they dined together several times a week and that was sufficient to keep Julie's aversion alive.

* Little one, fairer than flowers, rosy with eyes of green, if you think to follow love you are lost, alas! you are wholly lost!

As for Chaverny, he was rather a fine-looking man, a little too stout for his age, clean-skinned and ruddy, not by nature given to those vague uneasinesses which often torture the imaginative. He piously believed that his wife felt for him a calm affection (he was too much of a philosopher to believe that he was loved as upon the first day of his married life), and this belief caused him neither pain nor pleasure; if the contrary had been true, he would have made the best of it in the same way. He had served for some years in a cavalry regiment, but falling heir to considerable fortune he took a dislike to a soldier's life, retired from the army and married. It may seem a somewhat difficult undertaking to try to explain the marriage of two people who had not a single idea in common. On the one hand, grandparents and officious friends, who, like Phrosine, would marry the Venetian Republic to the Grand Turk, had busied themselves in arranging matters. On the other hand Chaverny belonged to a good family; in those days he was not too stout; he was merry and he was, in the full acceptation of the term, what is called "a good fellow." Julie was always glad to see him come to her mother's house because he made her laugh with his tales of the army, tales in a vein of humorous wit which was not always of the most unquestionable taste. She

thought him very pleasant because he danced with her at all the balls, and there was never a lack of good reasons to persuade Julie's mother to stay late, to go to the theatre, or to the Bois de Boulogne. Finally Julie thought him a hero because he had fought two or three duels with honour. But what completed the triumph of Chaverny was his description of a certain carriage which he would have built after a plan of his own, and in which he himself would take Julie for a drive after she had consented to give him her hand.

At the end of several months of married life all Chaverny's good qualities had greatly decreased in merit. He no longer danced with his wife—needless to say. His amusing stories had all been told three or four times. Now he complained that balls were kept up far too long. He yawned at the theatre and objected to the custom of dressing for dinner as being a perfect nuisance. His chief fault was laziness. If he made an effort to make himself pleasing to his wife he might perhaps have succeeded; but any kind of restraint seemed to him perfect torture; a view which he held in common with nearly all stout people. Society bored him because in it we are cordially received only in proportion as we exert ourselves to be agreeable. Coarse pleasures

seemed to him decidedly preferable to all more refined amusements; for to make himself prominent among persons of his own taste the only trouble he had to take was to shout louder than the others, which, for one with lungs as vigorous as his, was not very difficult. Moreover he prided himself on drinking more champagne than an ordinary man, and took his horse easily over a four-bar fence. As a consequence, he enjoyed a legitimately acquired esteem among those beings who are so hard to define, whom we call "young people," and who throng our boulevards about five in the afternoon. Hunting parties, country expeditions, races, bachelor dinners, bachelor suppers he sought out eagerly. Twenty times a day he said that he was the happiest of men, and every time that Julie heard him she cast her eyes upward, and her little mouth took on an indescribable expression of disdain.

Beautiful, young and married to a man who was uncongenial, she would naturally be surrounded by interested homage. But, in addition to the protection of her mother—a most prudent woman—her own pride (which was her great failing) had up to that time defended her against the seductions of the world. Moreover the disappointment following her marriage, by giving her a certain kind of experience, had made it

hard for her to grow enthusiastic over anything. She was proud of seeing herself pitied in society, and quoted as a model of resignation. After all, she was nearly happy, for she was in love with no one, and her husband left her entirely free. Her coquetry (and it must be confessed that she rather liked to show that her husband did not know what a treasure he possessed), her coquetry, instinctive, as that of a child, accorded very well with a certain disdainful reserve which was not prudery. She had the art of being pleasant to every one, but to every one without distinction. Scandal could not find the slightest trifle with which to reproach her.

II

The husband and wife had been dining at the house of Madame de Lussan, Julie's mother, who was about to leave for Nice. Chaverny, who was always bored to death at his mother-in-law's, had been obliged to spend the evening there in spite of his desire to join his friends on the boulevard. After dinner he settled himself on a comfortable sofa and passed two hours without uttering a syllable. The reason was simple. He was sleeping, decorously enough, seated, with his head

bent to one side, as if he were following the conversation with interest; he afterwards awoke and made some remark.

Then he had been obliged to take a hand at whist, a game which he detested because it requires a certain amount of application. All of which had kept him rather late. It had just struck eleven. Chaverny had no engagement for the evening—he really did not know what to do. While he was in this state of perplexity his carriage was announced. If he returned to the house he would have to take his wife home. The prospect of a twenty minutes' *tête-à-tête* with his wife was enough to frighten him; but he had no cigars in his pocket and he was dying to open a box which he had received from Havre just as he was starting out for dinner. So he resigned himself to his fate.

As he was wrapping his wife up in her shawl he could not restrain a smile as he caught in a mirror a reflection of himself showing the little attentions of a husband who has been married for a week. He also looked at his wife, whom he had scarcely noticed. That evening she seemed to him prettier than usual; so he spent some little time wrapping the shawl about her shoulders. Julie was as much put out as he at the prospect of the conjugal *tête-à-tête* that was in store for

them. Involuntarily her mouth drew itself down into a little pout, and her arched brows drew together. All of which gave her an air of such charming grace that even a husband could not remain unmoved. Their eyes met in the mirror during the operation of which I have just been speaking. Both were greatly embarrassed. To hide his confusion Chaverny, with a smile, kissed the hand which his wife raised to arrange her shawl.

" How they love each other," said Madame de Lussan to herself, noticing neither the cold disdain of the wife nor the indifferent air of the husband.

When they were both seated in their carriage, so close that they almost touched each other, they remained for some time without speaking. Chaverny was well aware that it would be very suitable to say something, but nothing occurred to him. Julie, on the other hand, maintained a silence that drove him to despair. He yawned three or four times, until he was ashamed of it himself, and the last time he felt called upon to apologise to his wife.

" It was a long evening," he added, by way of excuse.

Julie saw in this sentence merely a wish to criticise the evenings at her mother's and to say

something disagreeable. For some time past she had been in the habit of avoiding any discussion with her husband; so she continued to maintain her silence.

Chaverny, who that evening felt like talking in spite of himself, continued, after a couple of minutes:

"I had a good dinner to-day; but I really must say that your mother's champagne is too sweet."

"I beg your pardon?" said Julie, turning her head toward him with a very nonchalant air, and pretending that she had heard nothing.

"I was saying that your mother's champagne is too sweet. I forgot to tell her so. Really it is most astonishing, but people imagine that it is easy to select champagne. Well! Nothing could be more difficult. To twenty kinds of bad champagne there is only one kind that is good."

"Ah!" and Julie, after having accorded this interjection to courtesy, turned away her head and began looking out of the carriage windows. Chaverny leaned back and placed his feet on the cushion in the front of the carriage, a little mortified that his wife should show herself so insensible to all the trouble which he was taking to open up a conversation.

However, after having yawned two or three

times more, he continued, drawing nearer to Julie:

"That dress you have on is wonderfully becoming, Julie. Where did you get it?"

"Doubtless he wishes to buy one like it for his mistress," thought Julie. "At Burty's," she answered, with a slight smile.

"Why are you laughing?" asked Chaverny, taking his feet off the cushion, and drawing still nearer. At the same time he took one of her sleeves and began to touch it somewhat after the manner of Tartufe.

"I am laughing," said Julie, "because you noticed my gown. Be careful, you are rumpling my sleeves," and she drew away her sleeve out of Chaverny's hand.

"I assure you I pay particular attention to your gowns, and I have the greatest admiration for your taste. No, my word of honour, I was speaking about it the other day to—a woman who is always badly dressed—although she spends a shocking amount on clothes. She would ruin . . . I was telling her . . . I was quoting you . . ."

Julie was enjoying his embarrassment, and did not make any effort to relieve it by interrupting him.

"Your horses are really wretched. They

don't go at all. I shall have to change them for you," said Chaverny, completely disconcerted.

During the rest of the drive the conversation was not any more animated; both stopped short at simple replies.

At last they reached Rue . . . and separated, after bidding each other good-night.

Julie began to undress, and her maid had just left the room on some errand or other when the door of her bedroom opened somewhat suddenly and Chaverny entered. Julie hurriedly covered her shoulders.

" Excuse me," said he, " I should like to have the latest volume of Scott to read myself asleep. . . . It is ' Quentin Durward,' isn't it? "

" It must be in your room," answered Julie; " there are no books here."

Chaverny looked at his wife in her semi-disorder which is so becoming to beauty. She seemed to him " piquant," to use an expression which I detest. " She is really a most beautiful woman," he thought. He remained standing before her, without moving, his candlestick in his hand. Julie standing in front of him crumpled her cap and seemed to wait impatiently until he would leave her alone.

" The deuce take it, but you are charming this evening! " cried Chaverny, taking a step

forward, and setting down his candle. "How I like to see women with their hair in disorder!" And as he spoke he took in one hand the long tresses which covered Julie's shoulders, and slipped his arm almost tenderly around her waist.

"Good Heavens! How horribly you smell of tobacco!" cried Julie, turning away. "Let go of my hair, you will get it simply saturated with the odour, and I shall never be able to get myself rid of it."

"Bah! You say that at random because you know that I smoke sometimes. Don't be so stand-offish, little wife."

And she could not free herself from his arms quickly enough to avoid a kiss which he imprinted on her shoulder.

Fortunately for Julie her maid returned; for there is nothing that a woman finds more odious than those caresses which it is almost as ridiculous to refuse as to accept.

"Marie," said Madame de Chaverny, "the bodice of my blue gown is far too long. I saw Madame de Bégy to-day, and her clothes are always in perfect taste; her bodice was certainly two good fingers shorter than mine. Here, take it in with pins, to try the effect."

Whereupon there arose between the mistress and maid a most interesting dialogue upon the

exact dimensions befitting a bodice. Julie knew that Chaverny hated nothing so much as to hear fashions discussed, and that she was going to put him to flight. As a matter of fact, after five minutes of pacing up and down, Chaverny, seeing that Julie was completely taken up with her bodice, yawned inordinately, took up his candle again, and went out, this time not to return.

III

Commandant Perrin was seated by a little table reading attentively. His carefully brushed frock-coat, his police-force cap, and especially, the inflexible stiffness of his shoulders bespoke the old soldier. Everything in his room was very neat but exceedingly simple. An inkwell and two quills ready for use lay on his table beside a quire of note-paper, of which he had not used a single sheet in at least a year. If Commandant Perrin did not write, he read a great deal. At that moment he was perusing the "Lettres Personnes" and smoking his pipe with the amber mouthpiece, and these two occupations so completely absorbed his attention that he did not at first notice the entrance of Commandant de Châteaufort. The latter was a young officer from his regiment, with a charming countenance,

exceedingly agreeable, somewhat vain, and under the patronage of the minister of war—in a word, the opposite of Commandant Perrin in almost every respect. Still they were friends, I know not why, and saw each other every day.

Châteaufort clapped Commandant Perrin on the shoulder. The latter turned his head without removing his pipe. His first expression was one of pleasure at seeing his friend; the second of regret, worthy man! because he was going to be obliged to leave his book; the third indicated that his mind was made up and that he was going to do the honours of his apartment to the best of his ability. He fumbled in his pocket to find the key of the cupboard in which was shut up the precious box of cigars, which the Commandant did not smoke himself, but which he gave one at a time to his friend; but Châteaufort, who had seen him make the same gesture a hundred times, cried: "Stop, Papa Perrin, keep your cigars, I have one about me!" Then drawing out of an elegant case a cinnamon-coloured cigar beautifully slender at both ends, he lighted it, stretched himself out on a little sofa which Perrin never used, with his head on a pillow and his feet on the other arm. Châteaufort began by veiling himself in a cloud of smoke, while with closed eyes, he seemed to meditate profoundly on what

he had to say. His face was beaming with joy, and he seemed to have great difficulty in keeping locked in his breast the secret of a joy which he was burning to have guessed. Commandant Perrin, having placed his chair in front of the sofa, smoked for some time without saying anything; then as Châteaufort was in no hurry to speak, he said to him:

"How is Ourika?"

He referred to a black mare which Châteaufort had somewhat overdriven, and which was threatened with becoming broken-winded.

"Very well," said Châteaufort, who had not listened to the question. "Perrin," he cried, stretching out toward him the leg which was resting on the arm of the sofa, "do you know that you are lucky to have me for a friend?"

The old Commandant tried to think of the advantages he had gained from his acquaintance with Châteaufort, but nothing occurred to him except the gift of a few books of Kanaster, and a few days enforced confinement to which he had been obliged to submit for having been involved in a duel in which Châteaufort had played a leading part. His friend bestowed upon him, it is true, numerous marks of confidence. Châteaufort always applied to him when he wished a substitute on duty, or a second.

Châteaufort did not leave him much time for reflection, and handed him a note written on satin-finished English paper, in a pretty angular hand. Commandant Perrin made a grimace which with him was equivalent to a smile. He had often seen these satin-finished letters covered with dainty writing, addressed to his friend.

"Here," said the latter, "take it and read it. You owe all this to *me*."

Perrin read as follows:

"We shall be very happy if you will dine with us. M. de Chaverny would have gone to ask you in person, but he was obliged to go to a hunt. I do not know the address of M. le Commandant Perrin, and so can not write to ask him to accompany you. You have made me eager to know him, and I shall be doubly indebted to you if you can bring him with you.

"JULIE DE CHAVERNY."

"P. S.—My warmest thanks for the music you were so good as to copy for me. It is delightful, and you always show such good taste. You have given up coming to our Thursday receptions; and yet you know what pleasure it gives us all to see you."

"A pretty writing, but very fine," said Perrin as he finished. "But the deuce! What a nuisance her dinner is; for I shall have to get into

silk stockings, and there will be no smoking after dinner!"

"A terrible misfortune surely, to be obliged to prefer the prettiest woman in Paris to a pipe. What I admire most of all, however, is your gratitude. You don't thank me at all for this mark of favour which you owe to me."

"Thank you! But I don't owe you the pleasure of being asked to this dinner—if there is any pleasure about it."

"To whom, then?"

"To Chaverny, who was captain in our regiment. He must have said to his wife, 'Ask Perrin, he is a good old chap!' How can you suppose that a pretty woman whom I have seen only once would think of inviting an old herring like me?"

Châteaufort smiled as he looked at himself in the very narrow mirror which adorned the Commandant's wall.

"You show no insight at all to-day, Papa Perrin. Just read this note over again and you may find something that you had not noticed before."

The Commandant read and re-read the note, but he could see nothing.

"What, you old dragon," cried Châteaufort, "you don't see that she is inviting you to

please me, just to show me that she makes much of my friends, that she wishes to give me a proof of . . . ?"

"Of what?" interrupted Perrin.

"Of . . . you know very well what."

"That she loves you?" asked the Commandant, with a doubtful air.

Châteaufort whistled without answering.

"She has told you so?"

"But . . . it is evident . . . I should say."

"What? In this letter?"

"Of course."

Now came Perrin's turn to whistle. His whistle was as significant as the famous *Lillibulero* of my Uncle Toby.

"What!" cried Châteaufort, snatching the letter out of Perrin's hands, "you don't see how much . . . tenderness . . . yes, tenderness there is in it? What have you to say to this: 'My Dear Sir?' Notice that in the other note which she wrote me she wrote simply, 'Sir,' nothing more. 'I shall be doubly indebted,' that is proof positive. And do you see, a word has been effaced just after it, it is *a thousand;* she wished to write 'a thousand times my love,' but she did not dare; 'a thousand good wishes' was not enough. . . . She did not finish the note! Oh,

my good old chap, do you think that a woman of good family, like Madame de Chaverny, would throw herself at the head of your humble servant as if she were a woman of the streets? I tell you her letter is charming, and one would be blind not to feel the passion which it breathes. And the reproaches at the end because I missed a single Thursday, what have you to say to that?"

"Poor little woman!" cried Perrin, "don't grow sentimental over this rascal, or you will soon repent it."

Châteaufort paid no attention to his friend's apostrophe; but assuming a lower, wheedling tone:

"Do you know, old fellow," he said, "you can do me a great service."

"How?"

"You must help me in this matter. I know that her husband is not at all good to her—he is a beast and makes her very unhappy. You used to know him, Perrin; just tell his wife that he is a brutal fellow, and that he has the worst possible reputation. . . ."

"Oh!"

"A libertine. . . . You know it. He had mistresses when he was in the army; and what kind of mistresses! Tell all that to his wife."

"Oh! How could I say all that? It is dan-

gerous to put your hand between the tree and the bark."

"Oh, good heavens! There is a way of saying anything. But especially, be sure to speak well of me."

"That, now, is something easier. Still . . ."

"Not so easy. Now listen to me, for if I let you have your say, you would make a eulogy of me, which would not in the least help on my plans. Tell her that *for some time past* you have noticed that I am sad, that I have become silent, and have lost my appetite . . ."

"The very dickens!" cried Perrin, with a great burst of laughter, which made his pipe twist about absurdly; "I could never in the world look Madame de Chaverny in the face and tell her that. Only last evening I was almost obliged to carry you away from the dinner the fellows gave us."

"Maybe. But there is no use in telling her about that. It is well that she should know that I am in love with her; and novelists have persuaded women that a man who eats and drinks can not be in love."

"For my own part, I don't know of anything that makes me stop eating or drinking."

"Well, my dear Perrin," said Châteaufort, putting on his hat and arranging his curls,

"that's agreed, isn't it? Next Thursday I am to call for you; silk stockings and buckled shoes, correct evening dress! And above all don't forget to say shocking things about the husband and very nice things about me."

He went out twirling his cane gracefully and leaving Commandant Perrin much taken up with the invitation which he had just received, and still more concerned as he thought of the silk stockings, buckled shoes, and the strict evening dress.

IV

The fact that several of Madame de Chaverny's guests had begged off, put a certain damper on the gaiety of the evening. Châteaufort, who sat next to Julie, showed himself exceedingly attentive in supplying her wants, and was gallant and agreeable as usual. As for Chaverny, having taken a long ride during the day, he had a most prodigious appetite. So he ate and drank in a way that would have whetted the appetite of the most ill. Commandant Perrin kept him company, often filling his glass and laughing till the glass jingled whenever his host's coarse gaiety provoked him to laughter. Chaverny, finding himself in the company of soldiers once more,

had regained immediately the good humour and manners of his soldiering days. Moreover, he had never shown great delicacy of feeling in his selection of jokes. His wife assumed an air of cold disdain at each fresh incongruous sally; then she turned toward Châteaufort, and began an aside with him, so that she would seem not to hear a conversation which was unspeakably disagreeable to her.

Here is a sample of the urbanity of this model husband. Toward the end of the dinner, conversation happened to turn upon the opera, and the relative merits of several ballet dancers was discussed, and, among others, Mademoiselle —— was greatly praised. Whereupon Châteaufort even outdid the others, praising especially her grace, her figure, and her modest air.

Perrin, whom Châteaufort had taken to the opera a few days before, and who had gone only the once, remembered mademoiselle very well.

"Is she," he asked, "the little one in pink, who frisks about like a lamb? the one whose legs you talked about so much, Châteaufort?"

"Ah! You were talking about her legs?" cried Chaverny; "but don't you know if you talk too much about them you will get into trouble with your general, the Duc de ——? Have a care, my friend!"

"But I do not suppose that he is so jealous that he would forbid looking at them through an opera-glass."

"Quite the contrary, for he is as proud of them as if he himself had discovered them. What have you to say about them, Commandant Perrin?"

"I don't know much about any but horses' legs," answered the old soldier modestly.

"They are really stunning," continued Chaverny, "and there are none finer in Paris except those . . ." He stopped and began to twirl his moustache with a knowing air, and looked at his wife, who blushed to the very roots of her hair.

"Except those of Mademoiselle D——?" interposed Châteaufort, naming another ballet girl.

"No!" answered Chaverny, with the tragic voice of a Hamlet; "*but look at my wife.*"

Julie became purple with indignation. She flashed upon her husband a glance quick as lightning, in which were expressed scorn and fury. Then, making an effort to control herself, she turned sharply toward Châteaufort.

"We must," she said in a voice that trembled slightly, "study the duet from Maometto. It must exactly suit your voice."

Chaverny was not easily discountenanced. "Châteaufort," he continued, "do you know that I wished to have a cast taken of the legs I am telling you about. But I was never allowed to do it."

Châteaufort, who felt a keen joy at hearing this impertinent revelation, pretended to hear nothing and talked about Maometta with Madame de Chaverny.

"The person of whom I speak," continued the pitiless husband, "was usually horrified when her superiority in this direction was acknowledged, but in reality she was not at all vexed. Do you know she used to have her measure taken by the man from whom she buys her stockings—my dear, don't be vexed—the *woman* from whom she buys her stockings, I mean to say. And when I was at Brussels I took with me three pages of her writing with the most detailed directions for buying stockings."

But he talked on in vain, Julie was determined to hear nothing. She talked to Châteaufort with assumed gaiety, and her charming smile tried to convince him that she was listening to him alone. Châteaufort, for his part, seemed to be quite absorbed by the discussion of Maometto; but he did not miss one of Chaverny's coarse jokes.

They had some music after dinner, and Madame de Chaverny sang at the piano with Châteaufort. Chaverny disappeared the moment the piano was opened. Several callers came in, but did not prevent Châteaufort having frequent little asides with Julie. As they were leaving he assured Perrin that the evening had not been lost, and this his affairs were moving on satisfactorily.

To Perrin it seemed perfectly natural that a husband should talk of his wife's legs; so when he was alone in the street with Châteaufort he said to him in moved tones:

"How can you have the heart to disturb that nice home? He is *so* fond of his little wife!"

V

For a month Chaverny had been absorbed by the idea of becoming a gentleman-in-waiting.

It may seem surprising that a stout, lazy man, very fond of taking his ease, should be stirred by an ambitious thought; but he had no lack of good reasons to justify himself. "First," he told his friends, "I spend a great deal of money on the theatre boxes which I give to women. When I have a position at Court I shall have as many boxes as I wish, without being put to a penny's

expense. And then, you know all that goes along with boxes. Besides, I am very fond of hunting and I shall be able to ride to the royal hunts. Moreover, now that I have no longer a uniform, I do not know how I should dress to go to balls with my wife. I do not like the dress of a marquis; but the attire of a gentleman-in-waiting would suit me very well." Consequently he canvassed; he would have liked his wife to do the same, but she obstinately refused, although she had several very influential friends. As he had several times been of some slight service to the Duc de H——, who had at that time a good deal of influence at Court, he counted much upon his protection. His friend Châteaufort, who also had influential friends, worked for him with a zeal and devotion such as you may perchance meet with if you are the husband of a pretty woman.

One incident did much to help forward Chaverny's schemes, although it may have had for him dire enough consequences. Madame de Chaverny had procured, not without considerable difficulty, a box at the opera for a certain first night. This box had seats for six. Her husband, strange to say, and only after violently protesting, had consented to go with her. Now Julie wished to invite Châteaufort, and feeling

that she could not go alone with him to the opera she had compelled her husband to go too.

Directly after the first act Chaverny went out, leaving his wife alone with his friend. At first they maintained a somewhat constrained silence; Julie, because for some time past, she had had a certain feeling of embarrassment whenever she found herself alone with Châteaufort; Châteaufort, because he had his plans and he had deemed it fitting to seem moved. Casting a sidelong glance over the theatre he saw with pleasure that the glasses of several of his friends were directed toward the box. He felt a lively satisfaction as he thought that some of his friends were envying his good fortune, and that, judging from appearances, they would think it much greater than it really was.

Julie, after having several times sniffed at her smelling salts and her bouquet, spoke of the heat, the opera, and the gowns before them. Châteaufort listened with an air of abstraction, sighed, moved about on his chair, looked at Julie and sighed again. Julie was beginning to grow uneasy. Suddenly he cried:

"How I regret that the days of chivalry are past!"

"The days of chivalry! Why, tell me?" asked Julie. "Doubtless because the costume

of a knight of the Middle Ages would be very becoming to you?"

"You think me a perfect coxcomb," he said in a tone of mingled bitterness and sadness. "No, I regret that those days are past . . . because a man who felt his heart beating within him could . . . aspire . . . to much. As a matter of fact all you needed to do was to cleave through a giant to win a lady's favour. . . . Look, you see that great fellow in the balcony? I wish that you would command me to go and demand his moustache from him, in order that I might then have permission to say three little words to you without vexing you."

"What nonsense," cried Julie, blushing crimson, for she at once guessed those three little words. "But do look at Madame de Sainte Hermine, *décolletée* at her age, and in a ball gown!"

"I see only one thing, and that is that you are not willing to listen to me, and I have noticed it for a long time. . . . You wish it, so I keep silence; but . . ." he added in a low voice, and heaving a sigh, "you understood what I meant?"

"Indeed I did not," answered Julie sharply. "But where can my husband have gone?"

Very fortunately some one came into their

box and so relieved the embarrassment of the situation. Châteaufort did not open his lips. He was pale and seemed deeply moved. When their caller departed he made some indifferent remarks about the opera. There were long intervals of silence between them.

The second act was just going to begin when the door of their box opened, and Chaverny appeared, bringing with him a pretty woman elegantly gowned, wearing magnificent pink feathers in her hair. He was followed by the Duc de H——.

"My dear," he said to his wife, "I found my friends in a wretched box over at one side, where they couldn't see the stage decorations at all. They have been so good as to accept a place in our box."

Julie bowed coldly. She did not care for the Duc de H——. The Duke and the lady with the pink feathers were profuse in their apologies and their expressions of fear that they were disturbing her. They all arose, and each urged the others to take the best places. In the confusion which followed Châteaufort leaned over Julie and whispered to her, very softly, and very quickly:

"In Heaven's name, don't sit in the front row."

Julie was much astonished and kept her seat. When all were seated again she turned toward Châteaufort and asked him by a somewhat severe glance what this enigma meant. He was sitting with his head erect, and his lips compressed, while his whole attitude showed that he was deeply vexed. Julie put an unfavourable enough construction upon Châteaufort's advice. She thought that he wished to hold a whispered conversation with her during the evening, and to continue his strange speeches; which would be impossible if she remained in the front row. When she looked over the house she noticed that several women were directing their glasses toward her box, but that is what always happens when a new face appears. People were whispering and smiling, but what was there so extraordinary in that? The opera is as gossipy as a little village.

The unknown lady leaned over Julie's bouquet and said with a radiant smile:

"That's a superb bouquet you have. I am sure it must have been very dear at this time of year. Ten francs at least; but I suppose it was given to you. No doubt it was a present; ladies never buy their own bouquets."

Julie opened her eyes in astonishment, not knowing with what country guest she had to do.

"Duke," said the lady, with a languishing air, "you didn't give me a bouquet."

Chaverny hastened toward the door. The Duke tried to stop him and the lady too. She no longer cared to have a bouquet. Julie exchanged a glance with Châteaufort. It seemed to say, "I thank you, but it is too late." But even then she had not guessed the truth.

During the whole evening the lady with the feathers drummed with her fingers, out of time, and indulged in the most absurd conversation about music. She asked Julie the cost of her dress, of her jewels, of her horses. Never had Julie had any experience of such manners. She concluded that the unknown woman must be a relative of the Duke's who had recently come from Lower Brittany. When Chaverny at last came back with an immense bouquet, much more beautiful than that which he had given his wife, there was an outburst of thanks, admiration and endless excuses.

"M. de Chaverny, I am not ungrateful; to prove it, 'remind me to promise you something,' as Potier said. Truly, I will embroider you a purse, when I have finished the one I promised to the Duke."

At last the opera finished, to the great satisfaction of Julie, who felt ill at ease beside her

singular neighbour. The Duke gave her his arm, Chaverny offered his to the other lady. Châteaufort, sombre and ill-pleased looking, walked behind Julie, bowing stiffly to the acquaintances whom he met on the stairway.

Some women passed close by them. Julie knew them by sight. A young man was talking to them and grinning; they immediately looked at Chaverny and his wife with an air of keen curiosity and one of them cried: "Is it possible?"

The Duke's carriage drove up. He bowed to Madame de Chaverny, and repeated with great warmth his thanks for her kindness. In the meantime Chaverny wished to conduct the unknown lady to the door of the Duke's carriage, and Julie and Châteaufort remained alone for a moment.

"Who can that woman be?" Julie asked.

"I should not tell you, . . . for it is really very extraordinary."

"What do you mean?"

"Besides, all the people who know you will know very well what to think of it. But Chaverny! I should never have thought it!"

"What is it then? In Heaven's name, tell me who is this woman."

Chaverny was coming back, Châteaufort answered in a low voice:

"Madame Mélanie R——, the mistress of the Duc de H——."

"Good heavens," cried Julie, looking at Châteaufort with a stupefied air, "it can't be possible."

Châteaufort shrugged his shoulders, and as he was taking her to her carriage he added:

"That is just what those ladies said whom we met on the stairway. As for that other woman, she is a proper enough sort of woman in her way. She must be treated with care and consideration. She has even a husband."

"My dear," said Chaverny joyously, "you don't need me to take you home. Good night; I am going to the Duke's for supper."

Julie made no answer.

"Châteaufort," continued Chaverny, "do you care to come with me to the Duke's? There is an invitation for you. They have just told me they were interested in you. You made an impression, lucky dog."

Châteaufort declined coolly with thanks. He bowed to Madame de Chaverny, who was gnawing her handkerchief with rage when her carriage started away.

"Ah, by the way, old fellow," said Chaverny, "at least you will take me in your carriage to the lady's door."

"With pleasure," answered Châteaufort gaily, "but, by the way, do you know that your wife understood before the evening was over by whom she was sitting?"

"Impossible."

"Oh, you can be sure of it, and it really wasn't right of you."

"Nonsense, she is very good form; and then she isn't very generally known; besides, the Duke takes her everywhere."

VI

Madame de Chaverny spent a very restless and excited night. The conduct of her husband at the opera added the last straw to the burden of her wrongs, and required, so it seemed to her, an immediate separation. She would have an explanation with him the next day, and would declare to him her intention of no longer living under the same roof with a man who had so cruelly compromised her. Still, the prospect of this interview frightened her. Never had she had a really serious conversation with her husband. Up to that time she had expressed her vexation merely by seasons of injured silence, to which Chaverny had paid no attention; for, leaving his wife entirely free, it would never have

occurred to him that she could refuse him the indulgence, which, if there were need of it, he would have shown her. She was especially afraid of weeping in the midst of this explanation, and of Chaverny's attributing these tears to wounded love. Then it was that she bitterly regretted the absence of her mother, who would have been able to give her good advice, or to take upon herself the task of pronouncing sentence of separation. All of these considerations threw her into a state of the greatest uncertainty, and when at last she fell asleep she had decided to go for advice to one of her friends who had known her since she was a tiny child and to rely upon this friend's prudence as to the course of conduct which she should pursue toward Chaverny.

While giving way to her indignation she had not been able to prevent herself from comparing her husband and Châteaufort. The unmitigated coarseness of the former contrasted strongly with the delicacy of feeling of the latter and, while still reproaching herself for it, she felt a certain pleasure in recognising the fact that her lover was more solicitous for her reputation than her husband. This comparison of character led her on, in spite of herself, to consider the elegance of Châteaufort's manners and the very slightly distinguished bearing of Chaverny. She pictured

to herself her husband with his thick girth making unwieldy efforts to play the gallant with the mistress of the Duc de H——, whilst Châteaufort, with even more deference than usual in his manner, seemed to be trying to preserve for her that respect which her husband might cause her to lose. At last, as in spite of ourselves, our imagination often carries us very far, she thought more than once that she might become a widow and that then, young, and rich, there would be no obstacle in the way of her rewarding the constant love of the young officer. One unfortunate experiment proved nothing conclusively against marriage, and if Châteaufort's attachment was really deep. . . . But she banished these thoughts at which she blushed, and she promised herself that she would be more reserved than ever in her relations with him.

She awoke the next morning with a severe headache, and as little resolved, as the evening before, to have a decisive interview with her husband. She did not wish to go down to breakfast for fear she would meet him, so she had tea brought to her room and ordered her carriage, to go to call on Madame Lambert, this friend whom she had wished to consult. Madame Lambert was then at her country house at P——.

As she was breakfasting she opened a news-

paper. The first item which met her eyes read as follows: "M. Darcy, first secretary of the French Embassy, Constantinople, reached Paris yesterday in charge of important despatches. The young diplomatist, directly after his arrival, had a long conference with His Excellency the Minister of Foreign Affairs."

"Darcy in Paris," she cried; "how glad I shall be to see him! I wonder if he has grown very formal? The young diplomatist! Darcy a young diplomatist!" And she could not help laughing at the mere sound of the words. "A young diplomatist!"

This Darcy used to come with marked regularity to Madame de Lussan's evenings; he was then an *attaché* at the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He had left Paris some time before Julie's marriage and she had not seen him since. All that she knew was that he travelled a great deal and that he had obtained rapid advancement.

She was still holding the paper in her hand when her husband entered. He seemed in the best of good-humour. As he appeared, she arose to go out, but as it would have been necessary to pass near him to go into her dressing-room, she remained standing in the same place, but so overcome with emotion that her hand which

rested on the tea-table made the teacups distinctly rattle.

"My dear," said Chaverny, "I have come to say good-bye to you for a few days. I am going to hunt with the Duc de H——, and I must tell you that he was delighted by your hospitality yesterday evening. My little affair is getting on very well, and he has promised to recommend me to the King with all the warmth possible."

Julie grew red and white in turn as she listened to him.

"The Duc de H—— owes you that, at least," she said in a trembling voice. "He could not do less for one who so scandalously compromises his wife with the mistresses of his patron."

Then, making a last and desperate effort, she crossed the room with a stately step and entered her dressing-room, slamming the door behind her.

Chaverny stood for a moment in confusion and hanging his head. "How the dickens does she know that?" he thought. "But what matter, after all? What is done is done."

And as it was not his habit to dwell long upon a disagreeable thought, he whirled about, took a lump of sugar from the sugar-bowl, and with his mouth full called to the maid who was coming in: "Tell my wife that I will stay for four

or five days with the Duc de H——, and that I will send her home some game."

And he left the room with not another thought in his mind but of the pheasants and deer which he was going to kill.

VII

Julie set out for P—— with her anger for her husband considerably deepened, but this time it was on account of a rather slight cause. He had taken the new carriage to go to the château of the Duc de H——, and had left for his wife another, which, according to the coachman, was in need of repairs.

As she was driving along, Madame de Chaverny rehearsed the tale which she was to tell to Madame Lambert. In spite of her chagrin she was not insensible to the satisfaction which a well-told story gives to every narrator, and she prepared her tale, trying to think of a suitable introduction, and beginning sometimes in one way and sometimes in another. As a result she saw the delinquencies of her husband from every point of view and her resentment was proportionately increased.

As every one knows, it is four leagues from

Paris to P——, and however long might be Madame de Chaverny's list of charges you can imagine that it is impossible, even with the most envenomed hate, to dwell upon the same idea for four successive leagues. To the violent anger, with which her husband's wrongs had inspired her, succeeded sweet and sad memories by that strange faculty of the human mind which often associates a smiling picture with a painful sensation.

The clear, sharp air, the bright sunshine, and unconcerned faces of the passers-by all helped to turn away her mind from these bitter thoughts. She remembered scenes of her childhood, and the days when she used to take trips into the country with young people of her own age. She saw again her convent friends; she took part in their games, their meals. She tried to understand the mysterious confidences which she heard amongst the older girls, and she could not suppress a smile as she thought of a hundred little incidents which so early betrayed the instinct of coquetry in women.

Then she pictured to herself her entrance into society. Once more she danced at the most brilliant balls which she had seen the year after she left the convent. The other balls she had forgotten. One grows *blasé* so quickly; but those

balls brought back to her the memory of her husband. "Fool that I was," she said to herself, "why couldn't I see from the very first that I should be unhappy with him?" All the ill-timed remarks and all the platitudes with which poor Chaverny used to regale her with such assurance, one month before their marriage, she now found noted and carefully registered in her memory. At the same time she could not help thinking of the many admirers whom her marriage had reduced to despair, but who had nevertheless married or otherwise consoled themselves a few months later. "Should I have been happy with another?" she asked herself. "A—— is decidedly stupid, but he is not offensive. Amélie leads him around by the nose. One could always manage to live with a husband who was obedient. B—— has mistresses, and his wife is good enough to be deeply grieved by it. Otherwise he is very attentive to her, and I should ask for nothing more. The Comte de C——, who is always reading pamphlets, and who takes so much trouble that he may some day become a good *député,* perhaps he would be a good husband. Yes, but all those people are tiresome, ugly, and stupid." As she was thus passing in review all the young men whom she had known before her marriage the name

of Darcy presented itself to her mind for the second time.

Darcy used to count in the society of Madame de Lussan as a person of no importance, that is to say, they knew . . . the mothers knew . . . that his fortune would not permit of his marrying their daughters. To them there was nothing about him that could turn their young heads. Moreover, he had a reputation for gallantry. He was somewhat misanthropic and caustic, and it amused him greatly when he was the only man in a group of young girls to make fun of the weaknesses and pretensions of other young men. When he held a whispered conversation with young girls, their mothers were in nowise alarmed, for their daughters laughed aloud and the mothers of those who had pretty teeth even said that M. Darcy was an exceedingly delightful young man.

A similarity of tastes and the fear which each had of the other's sharp tongue had drawn Julie and Darcy together. After a few skirmishes they had signed a treaty of peace, an offensive and defensive alliance: they spared each other and they were always united in attacking their acquaintances.

One evening Julie had been asked to sing some song or other. She had a beautiful voice

and she knew it. As she went to the piano she looked at the women with a proud air as if she wished to challenge them. Now this evening some slight indisposition, or unfortunate fatality, had almost completely deprived her of her accustomed power. The first note of her usually musical voice was decidedly a false one. She became confused, blundered and completely lost her bearings; in short, it was a flat and dismal failure. Confused and ready to burst into tears poor Julie left the piano, and as she went back to her seat she could not help seeing the malicious joy, which her companions scarcely took the pains to conceal, as they saw this humiliation of her pride. Even the men seemed to have difficulty in suppressing a mocking smile. She lowered her eyes in shame and anger and for some moments did not dare to raise them again. When she raised her head the first friendly face that she saw was that of Darcy. He was pale and his eyes were filled with tears; he seemed even more touched by her mishap than she had been herself. "He loves me," she thought. "He truly loves me." That night she had scarcely slept and the sad face of Darcy was always before her eyes.

For two days she thought only of him and the secret passion which he must cherish for her. The romance was already making progress, when

Madame de Lussan found one day the card of M. Darcy with these three letters: "P. P. C." "Where then is M. Darcy going?" Julie asked a young man whom she knew.

"Where is he going? Don't you know? To Constantinople. He is leaving to-night."

"Then he doesn't love me," she thought.

Eight days later Darcy was forgotten. Darcy, for his part, being in those days rather romantic, took eight months to forget Julie. In order to excuse the latter and to explain the difference in their constancy it must be remembered that Darcy was living in the midst of barbarians, while Julie was in Paris, surrounded by attentions and pleasures.

However that may be, six or seven years after the separation Julie, in her carriage on the way to P——, remembered Darcy's melancholy expression on the day when she sung so badly; and it must be confessed she thought of the love which he probably had for her then, perhaps she even thought of the sentiment which he still might have for her. All of which kept her mind actively employed for half a league. Then for a third time M. Darcy was forgotten.

VIII

It was the cause of no small vexation to Julie, upon entering P——, to see horses being unharnessed from a carriage in Madame Lambert's court-yard, which announced a visit that was to be of some duration. Consequently it would be impossible to begin a discussion of her grievances against M. de Chaverny.

Madame Lambert, when Julie entered the salon, had with her a woman whom Julie had often met in society, but whom she scarcely knew by name. It was by an effort that she concealed displeasure which she felt when she found that she had made this trip to P—— in vain.

"Welcome, my dear," cried Madame Lambert, kissing her. "How glad I am to see that you haven't forgotten me! You couldn't have come at a more fortunate moment, for I am expecting to-day, I can't tell you how many people who are your devoted friends."

Julie answered with a slightly constrained air that she had expected to find Madame Lambert quite alone.

"They will be delighted to see you," continued Madame Lambert. "My house has been so dull since my daughter's marriage that I am

only too glad when my friends arrange to meet here. But, my dear child, what have you done with your rosy cheeks? It seems to me that you are very pale to-day."

Julie invented some little excuse, the long trip, the dust, the sun.

"It just happens that one of your admirers is going to dine with me, and he will be agreeably surprised. M. de Châteaufort and his faithful Achates, Commandant Perrin."

"I had the pleasure of entertaining Commandant Perrin a short time ago," said Julie with a slight blush, for she was thinking of Châteaufort.

"M. de Saint-Leger is coming, too. We must really arrange for an evening of charades next month and you must have a rôle, my dearest; you were our bright and particular star in charades two years ago."

"Really it is so long since I played charades that I am sure I should never be able to regain my former assurance. I know I should be obliged to have recourse to . . . But I think I hear some one coming . . ."

"Ah, but Julie, my child, just guess whom else we are expecting. But if you are to remember his name, my dear, you will have to search your memory well."

The name of Darcy at once presented itself to Julie's mind.

"His name is really becoming an obsession," she thought. "Search my memory, madame. That I can easily do."

"But I mean you must go back six or seven years. Do you remember one of your gallants when you were a little girl and wore your hair in braids?"

"Really, I can't guess at all."

"For shame, my dear. The idea of forgetting in that way a delightful fellow who, unless I am greatly mistaken, found such favour with you once upon a time, that your mother almost took alarm. Come now, my dear, since you thus forget your admirers, I shall be obliged to remind you of their names: you are to see M. Darcy."

"M. Darcy?"

"Yes, at last he has come back from Constantinople, only a few days ago. The day before yesterday he came to see me and I invited him for to-night. Do you know, ungrateful little wretch that you are, he asked for news of you with an interest that seemed to me quite significant?"

"M. Darcy?" said Julie hesitatingly, and with an assumed air of abstraction. "M. Darcy?

Isn't he the tall, fair young man . . . who is Secretary of the Embassy?"

"Yes, my dear, but you won't recognise him; he is greatly changed. He is pale, or rather olive colour, his eyes have sunken, and he has lost a good deal of his hair on account of the heat, so he says. In two or three years, if he keeps on, he will be completely bald in front. And still he isn't thirty yet."

At this point the lady who was listening to the recital of the misfortune of Darcy strongly advised using kalydor, from which she had derived much benefit after an illness which had caused her hair to fall out. As she spoke she ran her fingers through the heavy curls of her beautiful chestnut hair.

"Has M. Darcy been staying in Constantinople all this time?" asked Madame de Chaverny.

"Not all the time, for he has travelled a great deal. He was in Russia and then he travelled all over Greece. You haven't heard of his good luck? His uncle died and left him a fine fortune. He has also been in Asia Minor in —oh, what do you call it—Caramania. He is charming, my dear; he has the most entertaining stories, which will delight you, I know. Yesterday he told me such good ones that I

end he put the woman into a place of safe-keeping. It seems even," continued Madame Dumanoir, suddenly changing her expression, and assuming a nasal tone of piety, "it seems that M. Darcy saw to it that she was converted, and she was baptised."

"And did M. Darcy marry her?" asked Julie with a smile.

"About that I can tell you nothing; but the Turkish woman—she had a singular name, she was called Emineh—conceived a violent passion for M. Darcy. My sister told me that she always called him *Sotir, Sotir*—that means 'my saviour' in Turkish and in Greek. Eulalie told me that she was the most beautiful creature imaginable."

"We must declare war upon this fair Turk," cried Madame Lambert, "mustn't we, ladies? We must tease him a little. But this incident of Darcy's doesn't surprise me in the least. He is one of the noblest men I know of, and there are actions of his that bring the tears to my eyes whenever I tell about them. His uncle died, leaving a natural daughter whom he had never recognised. As he had not left a will, she had no claim upon the property. Darcy, who was the sole heir, wished her to have her share, and it is probable that this share is much larger

than his uncle himself would ever have made it."

"And is she pretty, this natural daughter?" asked Madame de Chaverny, with a rather malicious air, for she began to feel the need of saying something against this M. Darcy whom she could not drive out of her thoughts.

"Oh, my dear, how can you suppose? . . . But, moreover, M. Darcy was still in Constantinople when his uncle died and he had probably never seen the girl."

The arrival of Châteaufort, of Commandant Perrin and some others put an end to this conversation. Châteaufort sat down beside Madame de Chaverny, and seizing upon a moment when all the others were talking loudly:

"You seem sad," he said to her; "I should be very unhappy if what I said to you yesterday is the cause of it."

Madame de Chaverny did not hear what he said, or rather did not wish to hear, so Châteaufort had the mortification of being obliged to repeat his sentence, a mortification which was increased by Julie's rather dry answer. After which she took part in the general conversation; and changing her place, she left her unhappy admirer.

Not allowing himself to be discouraged,

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Not allowing himself to be discouraged,

Châteaufort indulged in a considerable display of wit, all in vain. Madame de Chaverny, to whom alone he was trying to make himself pleasing, listened with an air of abstraction. She was thinking of the approaching arrival of M. Darcy, and asking herself why her mind so dwelt upon a man whom she should have forgotten and who in all probability had forgotten her long since. At last the sound of an approaching carriage was heard; the drawing-room door was thrown open.

"Ah, there he is," cried Madame Lambert.

Julie did not dare to turn her head, but grew deathly pale. She felt a sudden and sharp sensation of cold, and she felt the need of gathering together all her strength to recover her poise and to prevent Châteaufort's seeing her change of expression.

Darcy kissed Madame Lambert's hand, and stood talking to her for some moments. Then a profound silence fell upon the room. Madame Lambert seemed to be expecting and giving time for a scrutiny of her guest. Châteaufort and the men, with the exception of the worthy Commandant Perrin, were watching Darcy with a curiosity tinged with jealousy. Since he had just come from Constantinople, he had a great advantage over them, and this was sufficient

reason to cause them to wrap themselves in that self-contained reserve which is usually assumed with strangers. Darcy, who had paid attention to no one, was the first to break silence. He spoke of the weather and of the roads, it mattered not what. His voice was soft and musical. Madame de Chaverny risked a glance at him, she saw him in profile. It seemed to her that he had grown thinner and his expression had changed. In short she approved of him.

"My dear Darcy," said Madame Lambert, "look carefully about you and see if you can't find here some ladies whom you used to know."

Darcy turned his head and saw Julie, whose face till then had been hidden under the brim of her hat. He rose hurriedly with an exclamation of surprise, went to her, holding out his hand, then suddenly checking himself, as if repenting his excessive familiarity, he bowed low to Julie, and expressed to her in very correct language the great pleasure which he felt at seeing her again. Julie stammered out a few conventional words and blushed deeply as she saw that Darcy still remained standing before her, looking fixedly at her.

Her presence of mind soon returned, and she in her turn looked at him with a gaze which is at the same time absent-minded and observant,

and which people in society can assume at will. He was a tall, pale young man upon whose features was imprinted an expression of calm; but a calm which seemed to result less from some habitual state of the soul, than from the control which it had succeeded in gaining over his countenance. Deep lines already furrowed his brow. His eyes were sunken, the corners of his mouth had dropped, and the hair on his temples had already begun to grow thin. Yet he was not more than thirty years old. Darcy was very simply attired, but with that elegance which indicates familiarity with good society and an indifference to a subject which occupies the thoughts of so many young men. Julie observed all this with pleasure. She noticed, too, that he had on his brow a long scar, which he only partially covered with a lock of hair, and which seemed to come from a sabre-cut.

Julie was sitting beside Madame Lambert, there was a chair between her and Châteaufort; but as soon as Darcy arose Châteaufort put his hand upon the back of the chair, which he kept balanced upon one of its feet. It was evident that he intended to keep it, like a dog in the manger. Madame Lambert was sorry for Darcy, who still remained standing before Madame de Chaverny, made room upon the sofa

beside her, and asked Darcy to sit down there; by which means he found himself near Julie. He hastened to profit by this advantageous position, and entered into conversation with her.

Still he had to submit to the usual list of questions about his travels from Madame Lambert and a few others, but he answered them briefly, and seized upon every occasion to begin again the almost private conversation which he was carrying on with Madame de Chaverny.

"Take Madame de Chaverny into dinner," said Madame Lambert, when the castle bell announced dinner.

Châteaufort bit his lips with vexation, but he arranged to be seated near enough to Julie at table to follow all her movements.

IX

After dinner, as it was a beautiful warm evening, they gathered in the garden around a rustic table for coffee.

Châteaufort had noticed with increasing vexation the attentions which Darcy lavished upon Madame de Chaverny. As he observed the interest which she seemed to be taking in the conversation of the new-comer, he himself grew less and less agreeable, and the jealousy which

he felt, had merely the effect of depriving him of all power to make himself attractive to her. He walked up and down on the terrace where the others were seated, unable to remain in one place, as is usual with people who are uneasy, looking often at the great black clouds which were gathering and which announced a storm, and looking still oftener at his rival, who was conversing in low tones with Julie. Sometimes he saw her smile, sometimes she grew serious, sometimes she timidly lowered her eyes. In short, he saw that Darcy could not utter a single word without its producing a marked effect upon her; and what especially chagrined him was, that the varied expressions which passed over Julie's face seemed to be but an image and reflection of Darcy's mobile countenance. At last, being no longer able to endure this torture, he drew near her, and leaning over the back of her chair just as Darcy was giving some one information about the beard of the Sultan Mahmoud, "Madame," he said in a bitter tone, "M. Darcy seems to be a very delightful gentleman."

"Oh, yes," answered Madame de Chaverny, with an expression of enthusiasm which she could not hide.

"So it seems," continued Châteaufort, "for he makes you forget your old friends."

"My old friends!" said Julie in somewhat severe tones, "I do not know what you mean." Then she turned her back upon him. Then taking a corner of the handkerchief that Madame Lambert held in her hand:

"How exquisite the embroidery is in this handkerchief. It is a wonderful bit of work."

"Do you think so, my dear? It is a present from M. Darcy, who has brought me back I can't tell you how many handkerchiefs from Constantinople. By the way, Darcy, was it your fair Turk who embroidered them for you?"

"My fair Turk, what fair Turk?"

"Oh, the beautiful Sultana whose life you saved and who used to call you . . . oh, we know all about it . . . who used to call you her saviour, in fact. You must know the word for it in Turkish."

Darcy smote his brow, laughing:

"Is it possible," he cried, "that a report of my misadventure has already reached Paris?"

"But there is no misadventure about it, there may be perhaps for the Mamamouchi who lost his favourite."

"Alas!" answered Darcy, "I see that you knew only half of the story, for this adventure was as unfortunate for me as was that of the windmills for Don Quixote. And must I, after

having been such a subject of laughter in the East, still be made sport of in Paris, for the one deed of knight-errantry of which I have ever been guilty?"

"What! we know nothing about this. Tell us about it," cried all the ladies at once.

"I should leave you," said Darcy, "with the tale which you already know and do away with the continuation, the recollection of which has nothing very agreeable for me; but one of my friends—I beg permission to present him to you some day, Madame Lambert—Sir John Tyrrel —and an actor too in this serio-comic scene, is going to come to Paris soon, and it is quite possible that he might take a malicious pleasure in representing me in a *rôle* still more ridiculous than that which I really played. Here are the facts in the case: This unfortunate woman, when she was once safely settled in the French Consulate . . ."

"Oh, but begin at the beginning," cried Madame Lambert.

"But, you have heard that already."

"We know nothing at all, and we wish you to tell us the whole story from beginning to end."

"Well, you must know that I was at Larnaca in 18—. One day I went outside the city to

sketch. With me was a very pleasant young Englishman, a jolly companion and a *bon-vivant,* one of these men who are invaluable when you are travelling, because they think of the dinner and never forget provisions and are always in good-humour. Moreover, he was travelling without any particular aim in view, and knew nothing of either geology or botany, sciences which are exceedingly disagreeable in travelling companions.

" I was sitting in the shadow of a stone wall, some two hundred paces from the sea, along which at this point runs a line of precipitous cliffs. I was very busy drawing all that remains of an ancient sarcophagus, while Sir John, stretched out on the grass, was making fun of my unfortunate passion for the fine arts, and smoking some delicious Turkish tobacco. Beside us a Turkish *dragoman,* whom we had taken into our service, was making coffee for us. He was the best coffee-maker and the worst coward of all the Turks whom I have ever known.

" Suddenly Sir John cried joyfully:

" ' Here are some people coming down the mountain with snow! we'll buy some from them and then we can make orange sherbet.'

" I raised my eyes, and I saw coming toward us a donkey, upon which a great bundle had been

laid crosswise; two slaves were steadying it on each side. The driver was walking in front, leading the donkey, and behind a venerable Turk, with a white beard, closed the procession, mounted upon a fairly good horse. All the procession advanced slowly and with much solemnity.

"Our Turk, as he sat blowing upon the fire, cast a sidelong glance at the donkey's burden, and said to us with a singular smile, 'It is not snow.' Then he busied himself with our coffee with his usual stolidity. 'What is it?' asked Tyrrel. 'Is it something to eat?'

"'Yes, for the fishes,' answered the Turk.

"At that moment the man on horseback started away at a gallop, and turning in the direction of the sea, he passed close to us, but not without casting upon us one of those scornful glances with which the Mussulmans so readily favour Christians. He urged his horse on, to the precipitous cliffs of which I have spoken, and stopped short at a point where they fell sheer away. He looked at the sea and seemed to be looking for the best place from which he might hurl himself down.

"We examined then more attentively the bundle which the donkey was carrying and we were struck then by its strange shape. All the

stories we had ever heard of women drowned by their jealous husbands came back to our minds, and we told each other of what we were thinking.

" ' Ask those scamps,' said Sir John to our Turk, ' if it isn't a woman they are carrying.'

" The Turk opened wide his frightened eyes but not his mouth. It was evident that he found our question altogether too much out of the way.

" At that moment, as the sack was near us, we distinctly saw it moving, and we even heard a sort of moan, or grumbling, which came out of it.

" Tyrrel, although he is somewhat of an epicure, is exceedingly chivalrous. He sprang to his feet like a madman, ran to the donkey driver, and asked him in English, so confused was he by his rage, what it was that he had there, and what he was intending to do with his sack. The donkey driver was careful not to make any answer. But the sack moved violently about, and the cries of a woman's voice were heard, whereupon the two slaves began to beat the sack with heavy blows from the thongs which they used to urge on the donkey. Tyrrel was incensed beyond all self-control. With a vigorous, well-aimed blow he threw the donkey driver to the ground and then seized one of the slaves by the throat, whereupon the sack, being roughly

jostled in the struggle, fell heavily upon the grass.

"I ran up. The other slave had taken upon himself to gather up stones, and the donkey driver was struggling to his feet. In spite of my aversion to interfering in the affairs of others, it was impossible for me not to come to the rescue of my companion. Having seized the picket which served to hold my umbrella in place when I was sketching, I brandished it about my head, threatening the slaves and the donkey driver with the most martial air which I could assume. All was going well when that infernal Turk on horseback, having finished his contemplation of the sea, turned around at the noise which we made and started off quick as an arrow and was upon us before we thought of it. In his hand he held a sort of ugly cutlass."

"An ataghan," said Châteaufort, who loved local colour.

"An ataghan," continued Darcy, with an approving smile. "He passed close to me and gave me a blow on the head with that same ataghan which made me 'see thirty-six candles,' as my friend, the Marquis de Roseville, has so elegantly put it. I answered by planting a good picket blow in his side. Then I played windmill to the best of my ability, striking donkey driver,

slaves, horse and Turk, having become myself ten times more furious than my friend Sir John Tyrrel. The affair would doubtless have ended very badly for us. Our *dragoman* observed a strict neutrality, and we could not defend ourselves very long with a stick against three infantrymen, a cavalryman, and an ataghan. Fortunately Sir John remembered a pair of pistols we had brought with us; he seized them, threw one to me and aimed the other immediately at the horseman who was giving us so much trouble. The sight of these arms and the clicking of the trigger of the pistol produced a magical effect upon our enemies. They shamefully took to their heels, leaving us masters of the field of battle, of the sack and even of the donkey. In spite of our anger we had not fired, which was a fortunate thing, for you can not kill a good Mussulman with impunity, and it cost dear enough to give him a beating.

"When we had wiped off some of the dust, our first care was, as you can easily imagine, to go to the sack and open it. We found in it a rather pretty woman, a little too fat perhaps, with beautiful black hair, and wearing a single garment of blue wool, somewhat less transparent than Madame de Chaverny's scarf.

"She drew herself nimbly out of the sack,

and without seeming very embarrassed she addressed to us a long speech which no doubt was very pathetic, but of which we did not understand a single word. At the end of it she kissed my hand. It is the only time, ladies, that a lady has done me such honour.

"We had in the meantime regained our composure, and saw our *dragoman* tearing out his beard like a man distraught. I was busy wrapping up my head as best I could with a handkerchief. Tyrrel was saying: 'What the deuce can we do with this woman? If we stay here the husband will come back with a force and attack us. If we return to Larnaca with her in this fine equipage, the mob will certainly stone us."

"Tyrrel, embarrassed by all these considerations, and having recovered his British stolidity, cried: 'Why the deuce did you take it into your head to come sketching here to-day?'

"His exclamation made me laugh, and the woman, who had understood nothing of what was said, began to laugh too.

"However, we had to decide upon some course of action. I thought the best thing we could do was to place ourselves under the protection of the French Consul; the difficulty was to get back into Larnaca. Night was falling,

which was a fortunate thing for us. Our Turk took us by some long by-path, and thanks to the cover of night and this precaution, we reached without any mishap the house of the Consul, which is outside of the town. I forgot to tell you that we composed for the woman a costume, which was almost seemly, out of the sack and the turban of our interpreter.

" The Consul, who was far from pleased at seeing us, told us that we were mad, and that one should respect the usages and customs of the country in which one is travelling, and that one should not try to ' put the finger between the bark and the tree.' In short, he accused us of self-importance, and he was quite right, for we had done enough to give rise to a violent riot and to cause a massacre of all the Europeans in the Island of Cyprus. His wife showed more humanity. She had read many novels and thought that ours was a most noble course of action. As a matter of fact, we had acted like heroes in a novel. This excellent woman was very pious. She thought that she would have no difficulty in converting the infidel whom we had brought to her, and that this conversion would be mentioned in the *Moniteur* and that her husband would be appointed Consul-General. This whole plan outlined itself in a moment in her

mind. She kissed the Turkish woman, gave her a dress, put the Consul to shame for his cruelty, and sent him to the Pasha to patch up the matter.

"The Pasha was very angry. The jealous husband was a person of importance, and was breathing out threatenings and slaughter. It was a scandal, he said, that dogs of Christians should hinder a man like him from casting his slave into the sea. The Consul was in sore straits; he talked much of the King, his master, and still more of a frigate of sixty tons, which had just appeared in the waters of Larnaca, but the argument which produced the most effect was the proposal which he made in our name of paying a fair price for the slave.

"Alas! If you only knew what the fair price of a Turk is! We had to pay the husband, pay the Pasha, pay the donkey driver for whom Tyrrel had broken two teeth, pay for the scandal, pay for everything. How often did Tyrrel sadly cry: 'Why the dickens did you have to go sketching by the sea-side?'"

"What an adventure, my poor Darcy," cried Madame Lambert. "That is how you received that terrible wound then. Do please raise your hair for a moment. What a wonder that it didn't lay your head open."

Julie, during this whole recital, had not once

taken her eyes off the brow of the narrator. At last she asked in a timid voice:

"What became of the woman?"

"That is just the part of the story that I don't care very much to tell; the end was so unfortunate for me, that at the present moment people still make fun of our chivalrous adventure."

"Was this woman pretty?" asked Madame de Chaverny, blushing a little.

"What was her name?" asked Madame Lambert.

"Her name was Emineh."

"Pretty?"

"Yes, she was pretty enough, but too plump, and all smeared over with paint, according to the custom of her country. It takes a long time to grow to appreciate the charms of a Turkish beauty. So Emineh was installed in the Consul's house. She was a Mingrelian and told Madame C——, the Consul's wife, that she was the daughter of a prince. In that country every rascal who commands ten other rascals is a prince. So she was treated like a princess. She dined at table with the Consul's family, and ate enough for four. Then when they talked to her about religion she regularly fell asleep. So things went on for some time. At last the day

was fixed for her baptism. Madame C—— appointed herself godmother, and wished me to stand as godfather, so there were sweets and gifts and all the rest of it. It had been decreed that this wretched Emineh should ruin me. Madame C—— said that Emineh liked me better than Tyrrel, because when she served me with coffee she always let some spill upon my clothes. I was preparing for this christianing with a compunction that was truly evangelical, when the night before the ceremony the fair Emineh disappeared. Must I tell you the whole truth? The Consul had for a cook a Mingrelian, a great rascal certainly, but an adept in preparing *pilaf*. This Mingrelian had found favour in Emineh's eyes, and she was without doubt a patriot in her own way. He carried her off, and with her a considerable sum of money belonging to M. C——, who could never find him again. So the Consul was out his money, his wife the outfit which she had given to Emineh, and I the gloves and sweets, not to mention the blows which I had received. The worst of it is that I was made responsible for the whole adventure. They maintained that it was I who freed this wretched woman, whom I would have been glad to know was at the bottom of the sea, and who had brought down so many misfortunes upon the heads of my

friends. Tyrrel managed to squirm out of it. He posed as the victim, while in reality he was the cause of the whole *fiasco,* and I was left with a reputation of a Don Quixote, and the scar which you see, which greatly stands in the way of my popularity."

When the story was finished they all went back into the salon. Darcy continued to chat for some time with Madame de Chaverny. Then he was obliged to leave her to have presented to him a young man who was a learned political economist, who was preparing himself to be *député* and who wished to have some statistics on the Ottoman Empire.

X

Julie, after Darcy left her, looked often at the clock. She listened abstractedly to Châteaufort and her eyes turned involuntarily to Darcy, who was talking at the other end of the salon. Sometimes he looked at her as he continued to talk to his statistician and she could not meet his penetrating but calm glance. She felt that he had already taken an extraordinary hold upon her, and she no longer thought of making any effort to free herself.

At last she called for her carriage, and either by design or accident she looked at Darcy as she called for it, with a glance which seemed to say, 'You have wasted a half-hour which we might have spent together.' The carriage was ready, Darcy was still talking, but he seemed tired and bored by the questioner, who would not let him go. Julie rose slowly, pressed Madame Lambert's hand, then went toward the door of the salon, surprised and almost piqued at seeing Darcy still remaining in the same place. Châteaufort was near her and offered her his arm, which she took mechanically, without listening to him and almost without noticing his presence. She crossed the hall, accompanied by Madame Lambert and two others, who went with her to her carriage. Darcy had stayed in the salon. When she was seated in her carriage Châteaufort asked her with a smile if she would not be afraid all alone on the road in the night, adding that he was going to follow close behind her in his gig, as soon as Commandant Perrin had finished his game of billiards. Julie, who seemed to be in a dream, was recalled to herself by the sound of his voice, but she had not understood what he said. She did what any other woman would have done under similar circumstances—she smiled. Then with a nod she said good-night to

those who were gathered in the doorway, and her horses set off at a rapid trot.

But just at the moment when her carriage was starting away she had seen Darcy come out of the salon, pale and sad, with his eyes fixed upon her, as if he were begging her for a special adieu. She started away, carrying with her the regret that she had not been able to give him a bow for himself alone, and she even thought that he would be piqued by it. She had already forgotten that he had left it to another to accompany her to her carriage. Now the wrongs were all on her side, and she reproached herself with them as if she had been guilty of a great crime. The feeling which she had had for Darcy a few years before, when she had left him after the evening she had sung so badly, was much less deep than that which she carried away with her this time. As a matter of fact not only had the years deepened her impressions, but all the accumulated anger which she felt at her husband had helped to increase them. Perhaps even the inclination which she had had for Châteaufort, and which at this moment was completely forgotten, had prepared her to give place without too much remorse to the much deeper feeling which she felt for Darcy.

As for him, his thoughts were those of a much calmer nature. He had felt pleasure in

meeting a pretty woman who recalled happy days and whose acquaintance would probably be very agreeable during the winter, which he was going to spend in Paris. But as soon as she was no longer before his eyes, all that remained with him was the memory of a few hours gaily spent together, a memory whose pleasantness was somewhat impaired by the prospect of getting to bed late and driving four leagues before reaching home. Let us leave him with his prosaic thoughts, carefully wrapping himself in his coat, and settling himself comfortably in his hired conveyance, roaming in his thoughts from Madame Lambert's salon to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Corfu, and from Corfu to a slight doze.

Dear reader, we will now follow, if it may please you, Madame de Chaverny.

XI

When Madame de Chaverny left Madame Lambert's château the night was horribly black and the atmosphere heavy and oppressive. From time to time vivid flashes of lightning illuminated the country, and the black silhouettes of the trees stood out against a background of vivid

orange. After each flash the darkness seemed blacker than before, and the coachman could not see the horses before him. A violent storm burst upon her. At first, a few occasional large drops of rain fell, but in a short time there was a heavy downpour. The heavens all around seemed to be aflame, and the roar of the celestial artillery soon became deafening. The terrified horses snorted and reared instead of going forward; but the coachman had eaten a good dinner and his thick coat and the copious draughts of wine which he had drunk took away from him all fear of rain or bad roads. He energetically belaboured the poor beasts, no less fearless than Caesar in the storm when he said to his pilot: "Thou art bearing Caesar and his fortune."

As Madame de Chaverny had no fear of thunder she paid little attention to the storm. She said over to herself all that Darcy had told her, and she regretted that she had not said a hundred things that she might have said to him, when she was suddenly interrupted in her meditation by a sudden violent jolt. At the same time the windows of her carriage were shivered to pieces, an ominous crackling was heard and her carriage rolled over into the ditch. Julie was quite unharmed, but the rain continued to fall, one wheel was broken and the lamps were put

out, and there was not a single house to be seen whither she might go for shelter. The coachman was swearing, the footman was fuming at the coachman, and cursing his awkwardness. Julie remained in her carriage, asking how they could get back to P——, or what they would have to do. But each one of her questions received the discouraging answer: "It isn't possible." In the meantime the dull rumble of an approaching carriage was to be heard in the distance. Soon Madame de Chaverny's coachman recognised, to his great satisfaction, one of his colleagues with whom he had laid the foundations of a tender friendship in Madame Lambert's pantry. He called to him to stop.

The carriage stopped, and scarcely had the name of Madame de Chaverny been mentioned than a young man who was in the *coupé* opened the door himself, crying: "Is she hurt?" And with a single bound he reached Julie's carriage. She had recognised Darcy. She was expecting him.

Their hands met in the darkness and it seemed to Darcy that Madame de Chaverny gave his a slight pressure, but that may have been a result of her fear. After the first questions, Darcy naturally offered her his carriage. At first Julie did not answer, for she was quite

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undecided as to what course she would pursue. On the one hand she thought of the three or four leagues that she would have to travel all alone with a young man, if she wished to go to Paris; on the other hand, if she went back to the château to ask hospitality from Madame Lambert, she shuddered at the thought of being obliged to recount the romantic accident of the overturned carriage and the help that she would have received from Darcy. To reappear in the salon in the midst of a game of whist saved by Darcy, like the Turkish woman, she really couldn't think of it! But then, too, the three long leagues to Paris! As she was thus hesitating and stammering awkwardly enough a few commonplaces on the inconvenience to which she had put him, Darcy, who seemed to read all that was going on in her mind, said to her coldly: "I beg you to take my carriage; I will stay in yours until some one passes on the way to Paris."

Julie, who was afraid of showing too much prudery, hastened to accept the first offer, but not the second, and as her decision was very suddenly made, she had not time to decide the important question as to whether she should go to P—— or to Paris. She was already seated in Darcy's carriage, wrapped up in the greatcoat, which he had hastened to offer her, and the

horses were trotting briskly toward Paris, before it occurred to her to tell him where she wished to go. Her servant had chosen for her when he gave the coachman his mistress's street and number.

The conversation began with a good deal of awkwardness on both sides. Darcy spoke briefly, and in a tone which seemed to indicate a slight displeasure. Julie thought that her lack of resolution had offended him and that he considered her a ridiculous prude. Already she was so completely under the influence of this man that she was violently reproaching herself, and her one thought was to drive away this displeasure for which she blamed herself. Darcy's coat was damp, she noticed, and at once taking off the coat which he had lent her, she insisted upon his wrapping himself up in it. Thereupon ensued a discussion, the result of which was that they split the difference and each one had his share of the coat, a great imprudence which she would not have committed but for this one moment of hesitation which she wished to make him forget. They were seated so close to each other that Julie could feel Darcy's breath upon her cheek, and sometimes a violent jolt from the carriage threw them even closer together.

" This cloak which wraps us both up reminds

me of our charades in the old days. You remember being my Virginia when we both wrapped up in your grandmother's mantle?"

"Yes, and do you remember the reproof she gave me upon that occasion?"

"Ah," cried Darcy, "what happy times those were! How often have I thought with mingled sadness and pleasure of those glorious evenings in the Rue Bellechasse. Do you remember those splendid vulture's wings that were fastened to your shoulders with pink ribbons, and the beak of gold paper that I manufactured for you with such skill."

"Yes," answered Julie; "you were Prometheus and I was the vulture. But what a memory you have! How can you remember all those trifles? And, what a long time it is since we last saw each other."

"Are you asking for a compliment?" said Darcy, smiling, and leaning forward so as to look into her face. Then in a more serious tone, "Really," he continued, "it is not so remarkable that I should remember the happiest days of my life."

"What a talent you had for charades," said Julie, who was afraid the conversation might take too sentimental a turn.

"Do you wish me to give you another proof

of my memory," interrupted Darcy. "Do you remember the compact that we made at Madame Lambert's? We agreed to say ill of the whole universe, but we were to defend each other against all comers. But our treaty shared the fate of most treaties—it was not carried out."

"How do you know?"

"I fancy that you have not often had a chance to defend me, for once away from Paris, what idle fellow would give me even a thought?"

"To defend you, no, but to speak of you to your friends."

"Oh, my friends," cried Darcy, with a smile tinged with sadness, "I had few enough in those days—with whom you were acquainted at least. The young men who frequented your father's house hated me, I don't know why, and the women gave small thought to the *attaché* of the Minister of Foreign Affairs."

"The trouble was that you didn't pay any attention to them."

"That is quite true. I never could play the gallant to people for whom I didn't care."

If it had been possible in the darkness to see Julie's face, Darcy might have observed that a deep blush overspread her countenance as she heard this last sentence, into which she had read a meaning that Darcy had never intended.

However that may be, laying aside these memories, which had been only too well kept by both of them, Julie wished to lead him back to the subject of his travels, hoping that by this means she herself might avoid talking. This plan of action almost always succeeds with travellers, especially with those who have visited some distant country.

"What a delightful journey you had," she said, "and how sorry I am that I have never been able to take one like it."

But Darcy was no longer in a mood to tell of his travels.

"Who is the young man with a moustache who was talking with you a little while ago?"

This time Julie blushed more deeply than ever. "He is a friend of my husband," she answered, "one of the officers of his regiment. They say," she continued, not wishing to abandon her Oriental theme, "that those who have once seen the blue sky of the Orient find it impossible to live elsewhere."

"Singularly unpleasing, I don't know just why, . . . I mean your husband's friend, not the blue sky. As for this blue sky, Heaven save you from it! One comes to take so violent a dislike to it from always seeing it the same, unchanging, that a dirty Paris fog would seem the

most beautiful sight in the world. Believe me, nothing gets on the nerves as does this blue sky, which was blue yesterday, and which will be blue to-morrow. If you only knew with what impatience, with what ever-renewed disappointment, we wait for and hope for a cloud."

"And yet you stayed a long time under this blue sky."

"Ah, you see, I should have found it rather difficult to do anything else. If I had been able to merely follow my own inclination, I should have come back quickly enough to the region of Rue Bellechasse, after having satisfied the curiosity which the strange sights of the Orient awake."

"I believe that many travellers would say the same if they were as frank as you are. How do people spend their time in Constantinople and the other cities of the East?"

"There, as elsewhere, there are different ways of killing time; the English drink, the French play cards, the Germans smoke, and some clever people, in order to vary their pleasures, get themselves shot when they climb upon the house-tops to turn their opera-glasses on the native women."

"Doubtless this last occupation was the one which you preferred."

"Not at all. I studied Turkish and Greek, which made me seem very ridiculous. When I had finished my despatches at the Embassy I used to draw, I used to gallop out to the Eaux-Douces, and then I used to go to the sea-shore to see if some human face would not appear from France or elsewhere."

"It must be a great pleasure for you to see a Frenchman at so great a distance from France."

"Yes, but for an intelligent man, it seemed that there appeared so often merchants selling hardware, and cashmeres, or what is much worse, young poets, as soon as they saw somebody from the Embassy, crying: 'Take me to see the ruins, take me to Saint Sophia, take me to the mountains, to the azure sea, I wish to see the spot where Hero sighed.' Then when they had got a sunstroke they would shut themselves up in their rooms and not wish to see anything except the latest numbers of the *Constitutionnel*."

"Oh, you are looking on the dark side of everything, an old habit of yours—you haven't corrected it, you know; you are just as cynical as ever."

"Tell me now, isn't a condemned soul who is frying in the pan permitted to cheer himself a little at the expense of his frying companions?

On my word, you don't know how wretched life is over there; we secretaries of embassies are like the swallows that never alight. For us there are none of those intimate relations that make the happiness of life." (He uttered these last words in a singularly strange tone, drawing closer to Julie.) "For six years I have found no one with whom I could exchange my thoughts."

"Then you had no friends over there."

"I have just been telling you that it is impossible to have any in a foreign country. I left two in France, one is dead, the other is in America, whence he will not return for some years, if the yellow fever does not keep him there for ever."

"So you are alone?"

"Alone."

"And ladies' society, what is it like in the East? Was there no satisfaction in it?"

"Oh, that was the worst of all. Turkish women were not to be thought of. As for the Greeks and Armenians, the best that one can say of them is that they are very pretty. When it comes to the wives of consuls and ambassadors, you must excuse me from discussing them. That is a diplomatic question, and if I said what I really think, I might harm my prospects in foreign affairs."

"You don't seem to care very much for your calling. In the old days you were so anxious to enter upon diplomatic life."

"In those days I knew nothing about the profession. Now I'd rather be inspector of street cleaning in Paris."

"Heavens, how can you say that? Paris, the most wretched hole in the world."

"Don't blaspheme. I should like to hear your palinode of Naples after two years' sojourn in Italy."

"To see Naples! There is nothing in the world I should like better," she answered with a sigh, "provided my friends were with me."

"Oh, under those conditions, I would take a trip around the world; travelling with one's friends is like sitting comfortably in a salon while the world files by before your windows, like a panorama that is unfolding itself."

"Well, if that is asking too much, I should like to travel with one—with two friends only."

"For my part I am not so ambitious. I should ask for only one man, or one woman," he added with a smile, "but this is a good fortune which has never befallen me, and which will never befall me." Then, more gaily, he continued, "As a matter of fact, luck has never come my

way, I have really wished for only two things, and I have never been able to get them."

"What were they?"

"Oh, nothing so very out of the way. For instance, I was wildly anxious to waltz with some one. I made a most careful study of the waltz, I practised for whole months alone with a chair to overcome the giddiness which never failed to seize upon me, and when at last I succeeded in freeing myself of these dizzy turns . . ."

"With whom did you wish to waltz?"

"What would you say if I should tell you that it was you? When, as a result of much toil, I had become a finished waltzer your grandmother, who had just taken a Jansenist confessor, forbade waltzing by an order which has still left a scar on my heart."

"And the second wish?" asked Julie, in deep confusion.

"My second wish I will confess to you. I should have liked . . . it was far too ambitious on my part . . . I should have liked to have been loved, really loved. It was before the waltz that I had formulated this wish—I am not following chronological order. I should have liked, I say, to have been loved by a woman who would have preferred me to a ball (the most dangerous of all rivals), by a woman whom I might

have gone to see in muddy boots, just as she was preparing to enter a carriage on the way to a ball—she would have been in ball dress and she would have said to me: 'Let us stay at home.' But that was madness. We should ask only for what is possible."

"Oh, how malicious you are; still your same old ironical remarks! You spare nothing, you are pitiless toward women."

"I? Heaven forbid! It is rather myself that I am slandering. Am I saying ill of women when I say that they prefer a pleasant evening party to a *tête-à-tête* with me?"

"A ball, evening dress, ah, good heavens, who cares for balls now?" She little thought of justifying all her sex who were thus arraigned. She thought that she understood Darcy's thought, and the poor woman understood nothing but her own heart.

"Oh, speaking about ball dress, what a pity that the carnival is over. I have brought back the costume of a Turkish woman, and it is really very pretty and it would be wonderfully becoming to you."

"You must make a drawing of it for me."

"Gladly, and you will see what progress I have made since the days when I used to scribble men's heads on your mother's tea-table. By the

way, too, I must congratulate you. I was told this morning at the Minister's office that M. de Chaverny was to be appointed gentleman-in-waiting. I was delighted to hear it."

Julie involuntarily started. Darcy continued without noticing this movement: "Let me bespeak your patronage at once. But really I am not altogether too pleased about your new dignity. I am afraid that you may be obliged to go to Saint Cloud for the summers. Then I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you so often."

"I shall never go to Saint Cloud," said Julie, in a voice choked with emotion.

"Ah, so much the better, for Paris, don't you see, is a paradise which you should never leave, except occasionally to go to dine in the country at Madame Lambert's, provided one comes home in the evening. How fortunate you are to live in Paris. You can't imagine how happy I—who am here for perhaps a short time only—am in the little apartment that my aunt has given to me. And you, so I have been told, live in the Fauburg Saint-Honoré. Your house was pointed out to me. You must have a delightful garden if the mania for building has not already changed your arbours into shops."

"No, my garden is still untouched, thank Heaven."

"What day are you at home?"

"I am at home nearly every evening, and I shall be delighted if you will come to see me sometimes."

"You see, I am acting as if our old contract still continued. I am inviting myself without ceremony and without being officially presented. You will forgive me, won't you? You and Madame Lambert are the only two whom I know in Paris now; every one has forgotten me, but your two houses are the only ones I thought of with regret during my exile. Your *salon* especially must be delightful. You used to choose your friends so well. Do you remember the plans you used to make for the time when you would be mistress of a house?—a *salon* that was inaccessible to bores, music sometimes, and always conversation, and all till very late hours. No pretentious people, and a small number of persons who were perfectly well acquainted, and who consequently never tried to tell what was not true, nor to seek effect, two or three witty women (and it is impossible that your friends should be otherwise), and your house is the most delightful in Paris. Yes, you are the happiest of women, and you make happy all those who come near you."

Whilst Darcy was talking, Julie was thinking that this happiness which he so vividly described

might have been attainable if she had been married to a different husband—to Darcy, for instance. Instead of this imaginary *salon,* so elegant and so delightful, she thought of the bores whom Chaverny had gathered about him; instead of these merry conversations, she recalled conjugal scenes such as that which had sent her to P——. She saw herself, moreover, for ever unhappy, and bound for life to the destiny of a man whom she hated and scorned; whilst he, whom she found the most pleasant in the world, he to whom she would have been glad to trust her happiness, must for ever remain a stranger to her. It was her duty to avoid him, to separate herself from him, and he was so near her that his coat brushed against the sleeve of her gown.

Darcy continued for some time to depict the pleasures of a Parisian life with all the eloquence which long privation had given him. Julie in the meantime felt the tears streaming down her cheeks. She trembled lest Darcy should notice it, and the restraint under which she held herself gave added force to her emotion. She choked, she did not dare make the slightest movement. At last a sob escaped her and all was lost. She buried her face in her hands, half suffocated with tears and with shame.

Darcy, who was wholly unprepared for it,

was greatly astonished; for a moment he was silent with surprise, but as her sobs increased he felt obliged to speak and to ask the cause of her sudden tears.

"What is wrong? In Heaven's name, do tell me what has happened."

And, as poor Julie, in answer to all these questions, merely covered her eyes more tightly with her handkerchief, he took her hands, and gently pushing aside the handkerchief:

"I beg you," he said in a changed voice, which went to Julie's heart, "I beg you to tell me what the trouble is. Have I unwittingly offended you? Your silence drives me to despair."

"Ah," cried Julie, unable to contain herself any longer, "I am very unhappy," and she sobbed more violently than ever.

"Unhappy, why? What do you mean? Who could make you unhappy?"

And so speaking he pressed her hands, and his head almost touched that of Julie, who wept instead of answering. Darcy did not know what to think, but he was touched by her tears. He felt six years younger, and he began to have a vision of the future which had not yet presented itself to his imagination—that of the *rôle* of confidant, which he might possibly change to a more intimate one.

As she persisted in giving no reply, Darcy, fearing that she felt faint, lowered one of the windows in the carriage, untied the ribbons of Julie's hat, and loosened her cloak and her shawl. Men are awkward in doing these little services. He wished to have the carriage stopped near a village, and he was already calling to the coachman, when Julie, seizing him by the arm, begged him not to stop, and assured him that she felt much better. The coachman had heard nothing and continued to drive toward Paris.

"But I beg you, dear Madame de Chaverny," said Darcy, again taking her hand, which he had for a moment given up, "I beg you to tell me what the trouble is. I am afraid . . . I don't understand in what way I was so unfortunate as to hurt you."

"Ah, you did not do it," cried Julie, and she gave his hand a slight pressure.

"Well, tell me who it is who can make you weep. Speak to me with confidence; are we not old friends?" he added, smiling and in his turn pressing Julie's hand.

"You were speaking of the happiness with which you believed I was surrounded, and this happiness is so far from me."

"What, have you not every aid to happiness? You are young, rich, and beautiful; your

husband occupies a prominent place in society."

"I hate him," cried Julie, beside herself; "I scorn him," and she hid her face in her handkerchief, sobbing more bitterly than ever.

"Oh," thought Darcy, "this is becoming serious."

And skilfully taking advantage of one of the jolts of the carriage, he drew still closer to the unfortunate Julie.

"Why," he said to her in the softest and most tender voice in the world, "why do you give way to grief? Is it possible that a being whom you scorn has so much influence on your life? Why do you allow him, him alone to embitter your life? Is it from him that you must seek happiness?" and he kissed her hand. She at once withdrew her hand in terror; he feared that he had gone too far, but, determined to carry out his adventure to the end, he said with a hypocritical sigh:

"How mistaken I was! When I heard of your marriage, I thought that you really loved M. de Chaverny."

"Ah, M. Darcy, you never knew me."

And her tone said distinctly, "I have always loved you, and you never would see it." At that moment the poor woman believed in all good faith that she had loved Darcy the whole time,

during the six years that had just passed, as deeply as she loved him at that moment.

"And you," said Darcy, with increasing animation, "have you ever really understood me? Did you ever know what my real feeling was? Ah! if you had only known me better, doubtless we should both have been happy now."

"Ah, how unhappy I am!" repeated Julie, with a fresh outburst of tears, and holding his hand tight.

"But even if you had understood me," continued Darcy with that expression of ironical melancholy which was habitual with him, "what would the result have been? I was penniless and you had a considerable fortune. Your mother would have rejected my offer with scorn. I was condemned beforehand. You, yourself, yes, you, Julie, before a fatal experience had shown you where true happiness lies, you would doubtless have laughed at my presumption. A well-appointed carriage, with a count's coronet on the door, would doubtless have been the best and surest means of being acceptable in your sight at that time."

"Good heavens, you too! Will no one then have pity upon me?"

"Forgive me, then, dear Julie," he cried, deeply touched himself; "forgive me, I beg you;

forget these reproaches; I have no right to make them. I am guiltier than you, but I did not know your real worth. I thought that you were weak, like the women of the world amongst whom you lived; I doubted your courage, dear Julie, and I have been cruelly punished."

He ardently kissed her hands, and she did not withdraw them. He was going to press her to his breast, but Julie thrust him back with a terrified expression and drew away from him as far as the width of the carriage would allow.

Whereupon Darcy in a voice whose very gentleness made it still more thrilling said:

" Forgive me, I was forgetting Paris. I remember now that people marry there, but they do not love."

" Oh, yes, I love you," she murmured between her sobs, and she let her head fall upon Darcy's shoulder.

Darcy enfolded her in his arms in an ecstasy, trying to stop her tears with his kisses. Once more she tried to free herself from his embrace, but this was her last effort.

XII

Darcy had been mistaken as to the nature of his emotion; it must be said at once that he was not in love. He had taken advantage of a bit of good fortune which had seemed to throw itself at his head, and which was too good to be allowed to let pass. Moreover, like all men, he was much more eloquent when pleading than when thanking. However, he was polite, and politeness often takes the place of more worthy sentiments. When the first moment of intoxication was passed he breathed into Julie's ears tender sentiments, which he composed without any great difficulty, and which he accompanied with many kisses upon her hands, so saving himself from speech. He noticed without any great regret that the carriage had already reached the fortifications, and that in a few minutes he would be obliged to separate himself from his conquest. The silence of Madame de Chaverny in the midst of his protestations, the dejection in which he seemed plunged, rendered difficult, even tiresome, if I may dare to say it, the position of her new lover. She sat motionless in the corner of her carriage, mechani-

cally drawing her shawl tight around her shoulders. She was no longer weeping, her eyes were fixed, and when Darcy took her hand to kiss it, this hand, as soon as he released his hold, fell back upon her knees inertly. She did not speak and she scarcely heard; but torturing thoughts crowded in upon her brain, and if she essayed to express one of them, another instantly succeeded to seal her lips. How can I describe the chaos of her thoughts, or rather of those images which succeeded one another as rapidly as the pulsations of her heart? She thought that she heard a ringing in her ears without rhyme or reason, but all with a terrible meaning. That morning she had accused her husband; he was vile in her eyes, now she was a hundred times more despicable. It seemed to her that her shame was public; the mistress of the Duc de H—— would scorn her in her turn. Madame Lambert and all her friends would refuse to see her, and Darcy, did he love her? He scarcely knew her; he had forgotten her, he had not at once recognised her. Perhaps he had found her terribly changed. He was cold toward her; that was the *coup de grâce.* Her infatuation for a man who scarcely knew her, who had not shown for her any love, . . . but merely politeness. It was impossible that he should love her. She, herself, did she love him?

No, since she had married almost as soon as he had gone away.

When the carriage entered Paris the clocks were striking one o'clock. At four o'clock she had seen Darcy for the first time. Notwithstanding their early acquaintance she had forgotten his features, his voice, he had been a stranger to her; nine hours later she had become his mistress, nine hours had sufficed for the singular fascination, had sufficed to dishonour her in her own eyes, in the eyes of Darcy himself. For what could he think of so weak a woman? How could he help scorning her?

Sometimes the gentleness of Darcy's voice, the tender words which he uttered revived her a little. Then she tried to make herself believe that he really felt the love of which he spoke. She had not so lightly surrendered herself. Their love had lasted since the time when Darcy had left her. Darcy must know that she had married only because of the vexation which his departure had caused her. It was Darcy who had been to blame. Nevertheless he had always loved her during his long absence, and upon his return he had been happy to find her as faithful as he had been. Her frank avowal, her very weakness must be pleasing to Darcy, who hated dissimulation. But the absurdity of these arguments soon became ap-

parent to her. These consoling thoughts vanished and she was left a prey to shame and despair.

At one moment she wished to give utterance to what she felt. She had just thought of herself as being outlawed by the world and abandoned by her family. After having so grievously given offence to her husband, her pride would not allow her to see him again. "Darcy loves me," she told herself, "and I can love no one but him; without him I can never be happy. I shall be happy everywhere with him. Let us go together then, to some spot where I can never see a face that will bring a blush to my face. Let him take me to Constantinople with him."

Darcy never for an instant dreamed what was going on in Julie's heart. He had just noticed that they had turned into the street where Madame de Chaverny lived, and he was drawing on his kid gloves with great calm.

"By the way," he said, "I must be officially presented to M. de Chaverny. I have no doubt that we shall soon be good friends, as I am presented by Madame Lambert. I shall be on a pleasant footing in your house. In the meantime, as he is in the country, I may come to see you?"

Speech entirely failed Julie. Every word that Darcy uttered cut her to the quick. How

could she talk of flight, of elopement with this man who was so calm, so cool, and whose one thought was to arrange his liaison in the most convenient manner possible? In her rage she broke the necklace she wore, and twisted the chain between her fingers. The carriage stopped at the door of her house; Darcy was very attentive in wrapping her shawl around her and helping her to readjust her hat. When the carriage-door was opened, he very respectfully offered her his arm, but Julie stepped out without help from him.

"I shall beg permission," he said with a deep bow, "to call to inquire for you."

"Good-bye," said Julie in a choked voice.

Darcy once more got into his carriage and drove home, whistling with the air of a man who is well pleased with his day's work.

XIII

As soon as he found himself once more in his bachelor apartments Darcy got into a Turkish dressing-gown, put on slippers, and having filled with Turkish tobacco his long pipe with the brier-wood stem and amber mouthpiece, he settled himself down to enjoy it, leaning back in a great

leather-covered arm-chair which was comfortably padded. To those persons who may be astonished at seeing him engaged in this vulgar occupation at a moment when he might perhaps be given up to more poetical dreams, I will answer that a good pipe is a useful, not to say necessary, adjunct to reverie, and that the truest way of really enjoying a pleasure is to connect it with some other pleasure. One of my friends, a very luxurious man, never used to open a letter from his mistress without having first taken off his necktie, stirred up the fire, if it were winter-time, and comfortably stretched himself out on the sofa.

"Really," said Darcy to himself, "I should have been a great idiot if I had followed Tyrrel's advice and bought a Greek slave to bring her back to Paris. On my word, that would have been, as my friend Haleb-Effendi used to say, bringing figs to Damascus. Thank fortune, civilisation has made great progress during my absence, and strictness does not seem to have been carried to excess. Poor Chaverny!—ah! ah! if, however, I had been rich enough a few years ago, I should have married Julie, and perhaps it would have been Chaverny who would have brought her home to-night. If ever I marry, I shall have my wife's carriage frequently overhauled, so that she will have no need of wandering knights to rescue

her from ditches. Let us consider the matter. Taking it all in all, she is a very pretty woman; she is witty, and if I were not as old as I am, I should be inclined to think that it is owing to my own great merit. . . . Ah! my own great merit. . . . Alas! in a month perhaps my merit will be on a level with that of the gentleman with the moustache. How I wish that that little Nastasia whom I liked so much had been able to read and write, and been able to talk about things with intelligent people; for I think she is the only woman who really loved me. Poor child!" His pipe went out and he soon fell asleep.

XIV

When Madame de Chaverny entered her own apartments, she made a powerful effort to control herself to tell her maid in a natural voice that she did not need her, and wished to be left alone. As soon as this servant had gone out she threw herself upon her bed and there she began to weep all the more bitterly, now that she was alone, since Darcy's presence had obliged her to keep herself under control.

Night certainly has a great influence on moral as well as physical suffering. It gives a gloomy

tinge to everything, and ideas, which in the daytime would seem harmless or even pleasant, trouble and torture us at night just like the spectres which have no power except in the darkness. It seems that in the night-time our thoughts increase in activity and that reason loses its sway, a sort of inner phantasmagoria disturbs and frightens us without our being able to cast aside the cause of our fear or to calmly examine its reality.

Picture then poor Julie stretched out upon her bed, half dressed, ceaselessly tossing about, sometimes a prey to burning heat, sometimes shivering with cold, starting at the slightest cracking of the woodwork, and hearing distinctly every heart-beat. All that she was aware of was an indescribable anguish, the cause of which she sought in vain. Then suddenly the memory of the fatal evening flashed into her mind as quick as lightning, and with it there came a sharp, fierce pain like that which a red-hot iron would produce if applied to a freshly healed wound.

Sometimes she looked at her lamp, noticing with dull attention all the flickerings of the flame until the tears which gathered in her eyes, she knew not why, dimmed the light before her.

"Why these tears?" she said to herself. "Ah! I have lost my honour!"

Sometimes she counted the balls of the fringe of her bed-curtains, but she could never remember the number. "What can this madness be?" she thought to herself. "Madness? yes! for an hour ago I abandoned myself like a miserable courtesan to a man whom I do not know." Then with dull eye she followed the hands of her watch with the anxiety of a condemned man who sees the hour of his execution approaching. "Three hours ago," she said to herself with a sudden start, "I was with him, and I have lost my honour."

She spent the whole night in this feverish agitation. When day dawned she opened her window and the fresh, sharp morning air brought her a little relief. Leaning out of her window, which opened into her garden, she breathed in the cold air with a certain enjoyment. Little by little her ideas became less confused. To the vague torture and delirium which had agitated her there succeeded a concentrated despair which by comparison seemed a repose of spirit.

She must come to some decision, so she tried to think of what she must do, but not once did she think of seeing Darcy again. That seemed to her perfectly impossible. She would have died of shame upon seeing him. She must leave Paris, or in two days all the world would be pointing the finger of scorn at her. Her mother was at Nice;

she would go to her, would confess all to her; then after having poured out her confession upon her breast, she would have only one thing to do, and that was to seek out some lonely spot in Italy, unknown to travellers, where she would go to live alone and ere long die. When once she had taken this resolution she felt quieter. She sat down before a little table in front of the window, and with her head in his hands she wept. This time without bitterness. But at last fatigue and exhaustion overcame her and she fell asleep, or rather for nearly an hour she ceased all thought. She wakened with a feverish shudder. The weather had changed. The sky was gray, and a fine, cold rain foretold a cold, wet day. Julie rang for her maid. "My mother is ill," she said. "I must leave at once for Nice. Pack my trunk; I must leave in an hour."

"Oh, my lady, what is wrong? Are you not ill? My lady did not go to bed!" cried the maid, surprised and alarmed at the change which she saw in her mistress.

"I wish to leave," said Julie impatiently. "It is absolutely necessary that I leave. Pack a trunk for me."

In our modern civilisation it is not sufficient simply to will it to go from one place to another; one has to pack, carry boxes, and busy oneself

with a hundred tiresome preparations, which are enough to take away all desire to travel. But Julie's impatience greatly shortened all these necessary delays. She went and came from room to room, helped herself in packing the trunks, crushing in hats and dresses that were usually so carefully handled. Nevertheless, all her activity served rather to delay her servants than to help them on.

"My lady has doubtless told M. de Chaverny?" the maid timidly asked.

Julie without answering took a sheet of paper. She wrote: "My mother is ill at Nice; I am going to her." She folded the paper, but she could not make up her mind to write the address upon it.

Whilst she was in the midst of preparing to depart a servant entered.

"M. de Châteaufort asks if my lady is receiving. There is also another gentleman who came at the same time, whom I do not know. Here is his card."

She read: "E. Darcy, Secretary of the Embassy." She could scarcely suppress a cry.

"I am not at home to any one," she cried. "Say that I am ill; do not say that I am going away."

She could not understand how Châteaufort

and Darcy were coming at the same time to see her, and in her confusion she did not for a moment doubt that Darcy had already chosen Châteaufort as his confidant. Nothing was more simple, however, than their simultaneous appearance. Led there by the same reason, they had met at the door, and after having exchanged exceedingly cool salutations, they had inwardly cursed each other with all their hearts.

Having received the servant's message, they went down the stairway together, bowed once more, even more coldly than before, and separated, each going in an opposite direction.

Châteaufort had noticed the particular attention which Madame de Chaverny had shown Darcy, and from that moment he had been filled with hate for him. For his part, Darcy, who prided himself upon reading faces, had not noticed Châteaufort's air of constraint and vexation without concluding that he was in love with Julie, and since as a diplomat he was inclined to put the worst construction upon things *a priori*, he had very lightly supposed that Julie was not cruel toward Châteaufort.

" That strange flirt," he said to himself, " did not wish to receive us together for fear of having an interview like that in the ' Misanthrope,' but I should have been very dull indeed if I could not

have found some excuse for out-staying this young fop. Certainly if I had just waited until he had had his back turned I should have been admitted to her presence, for I hold over him the unquestionable advantage of novelty."

So thinking, he stopped, then he turned back, then he went again to Madame de Chaverny's door. Châteaufort, who had also turned round several times to observe him, retraced his steps and stationed himself like a sentinel a short distance away to watch him.

Darcy said to the servant, who looked surprised at seeing him again, that he had forgotten to give him a line for his mistress, that it was an urgent matter, and had to do with a message which a lady had given to him for Madame de Chaverny. Remembering that Julie understood English, he wrote in pencil upon his card: "Begs leave to ask when he can show to Madame de Chaverny his Turkish album." He handed his card to the servant and said he would wait for an answer.

This answer was a long time in coming. At last the servant came back and seemed much troubled. "My mistress," he said, "fainted a few moments ago and is not well enough now to give you an answer."

All this had lasted just about half an hour.

Darcy had small belief in the account of Madame de Chaverny's fainting, but it was perfectly evident that she did not wish to see him. He accepted his fate philosophically, and remembering that he had some visits to make in the neighbourhood, he left without being otherwise put about by this contretemps.

Châteaufort awaited him in furious anxiety, and seeing him pass he did not for a moment doubt that he was a successful rival, and he vowed that upon the first occasion he would avenge himself upon the faithless woman and her companion in guilt. Commandant Perrin, whom he very opportunely met, listened to his tale and consoled him as best he could, not without arguing with him the probable groundlessness of his suspicions.

XV

Julie had really fainted when she received Darcy's second card. Her swoon had been followed by a hemorrhage which had greatly weakened her. Her maid had sent for the doctor, but Julie obstinately refused to see him. About four o'clock the post-chaise came, her trunks had been strapped on, everything was ready for her departure. Julie stepped into her coach, cough-

ing terribly, and in a pitiable state. During the whole evening and the whole night she spoke only to the servant who was on the box, and then merely to tell him to have the postilions urge on the horses. She continued to cough and seemed to suffer great distress in her chest; she was so weak that she fainted when the door was opened. They took her into a wretched inn, where they put her to bed. The village doctor was called in. He found her in a raging fever and forbade her to continue her journey. Nevertheless, she was still anxious to go on. In the evening she became delirious and all her symptoms were more unfavourable. She talked incessantly and with great rapidity, so that it was difficult to understand her. The names of Darcy, Châteaufort and of Madame Lambert frequently recurred in her incoherent sentences. The maid wrote to M. de Chaverny to tell him of his wife's illness, but she was nearly thirty leagues from Paris. Chaverny was hunting with the Duc de H——, and her illness was making such progress that it was doubtful if he could arrive in time.

The man-servant in the meantime had gone on horseback to a neighbouring town and had brought back a doctor. The latter found fault with his *confrère's* treatment, said that he had

been called in very late and that her condition was very serious.

Her delirium disappeared toward daybreak, and she then fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke two or three days later, she seemed to have great difficulty in remembering by what series of events she found herself in bed in the wretched sleeping-room of the inn. Nevertheless, her memory soon returned. She said that she felt better and she even spoke of setting out again the next day. Then after having seemed to meditate for a long time, with her hand pressed to her forehad, she called for ink and paper and tried to write. Her maid saw her begin letters which she always tore up after she had written the first few words. At the same time she charged them to burn the scraps of paper. The maid noticed on several of the scraps this word: "Sir," which seemed to her very extraordinary, she said, for she thought that her mistress was writing to her mother or to her husband. On another bit of paper she read: "You must indeed scorn me." For nearly half an hour she made vain efforts to write this letter which seemed to be weighing upon her mind. At last, prevented by her extreme exhaustion from continuing, she pushed away the desk that they had placed upon her bed, and said with a bewildered

air to her maid: "Write yourself to M. Darcy."

"What must I write, my lady?" asked the maid, convinced that her delirium was returning. "Write to him that he does not know me and that I do not know him."

And she fell back exhausted upon her pillow.

These were the last connected words that she spoke. Her delirium returned and did not leave her. She died the next day without any great apparent suffering.

XVI

Chaverny arrived three days after the burial. His grief seemed deep and real and all the villagers wept as they saw him standing in the graveyard looking down upon the freshly turned earth which covered his wife's coffin. At first he wished to have her body taken up and carried to Paris, but as the Mayor had objected and the notary had warned him that there would be endless formalities, he contented himself with ordering a costly gravestone and making arrangements for the erection of a handsome but chaste monument.

Châteaufort was much touched by this sud-

den death. He declined several ball invitations and for some time he wore nothing but black.

XVII

Society gave several accounts of Madame de Chaverny's death. According to some she had a vision, or, if you prefer it, a presentiment that her mother was ill. She had been so impressed by it that she had at once set out for Nice, in spite of a heavy cold which she had caught on the way home from Madame Lambert's, and this cold had run on into pneumonia. Others who showed more penetration said, with a mysterious air, that Madame de Chaverny, not being able to conceal the love which she really felt for M. de Châteaufort, had wished to go to her mother to seek courage to resist her temptation, and that the cold and pneumonia were a result of her hurried departure. Upon this point all were agreed.

Darcy never spoke of her. Three or four months after her death he married well. When his marriage was announced to Madame Lambert, she said as she was congratulating him:

"Really, your wife is charming, and no one but my poor dear Julie could have been so well

suited to you. What a pity that you were too poor for her when she married."

Darcy smiled with his habitual ironical smile, but he made no answer.

These two hearts who had failed to understand each other were, perhaps, made one for the other.

1833.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Les Ames du Purgatoire

SOULS IN PURGATORY

CICERO has said somewhere, I think it is in his treatise, "On the Nature of the Gods," that there were many Jupiters—a Jupiter in Crete, another at Olympus, another somewhere else; so that in all Greece there was not a city of any importance whatever that did not possess a Jupiter of her own. From all these a single Jupiter has arisen, and to him have been attributed all the adventures of his namesakes. It is this fact which accounts for the prodigious number of exploits imputed to this god.

The same confusion has obtained concerning Don Juan, a personage whose celebrity approaches closely to that of Jupiter. Seville alone claimed several Don Juans, and many another city had hers. In the beginning, each had his distinct legend, but in the course of time all became merged into one.

Upon close examination, however, it is not difficult to assign to each his own share in the mythical story, or, at least, to distinguish two of these heroes, to wit: Don Juan Tenorio, who, as

every one knows, was carried away by a marble statue; and Don Juan de Maraña, whose end was quite different.

The stories told of the lives of both men are very nearly the same; it is the conclusion alone that distinguishes them. There is an ending to suit every taste, like the productions of Ducis, which conclude happily or otherwise, according to the sensitiveness of the reader.

As to the truth of this story, or rather of these two stories, there is no question, and the local patriotism of the Sevillians would be deeply offended were we to doubt the existence of these scapegraces, who have cast suspicion upon the genealogy of their most aristocratic families. The home of Don Juan Tenorio is still pointed out to strangers, and no friend of art has ever been to Seville without visiting the Church *de la Caridad.* There he will have seen the tomb of the Caballero de Maraña, with this inscription, inspired by his humility, or if one prefers, by his pride: *Aqui yace el peor hombre que fué en el mundo.* After seeing this, how could it be possible to doubt?

It is true that your guide, after conducting you to these two monuments, will go on to tell you how Don Juan (which one, is not known) made extraordinary overtures to Giralda, the

bronze statue which surmounts the Moorish tower of the Cathedral; and how Giralda accepted them; and how, mellow with wine, Don Juan was strolling along the left bank of the Guadalquivir and asked a light of a man who was walking on the right bank smoking a cigar; and how the smoker's arm (for it was no other than the devil himself) became longer and longer until it reached across the river, and presented his cigar to Don Juan, who lighted his own without so much as moving a muscle, and so hardened was he, that he failed to profit by the warning, and . . .

I have endeavoured to give to each of these Don Juans the share which belongs to him in their common career of wickedness and crime. For want of a better way, I have made a studious effort to relate of my hero, Don Juan de Maraña, only such adventures as do not, by right of prescription, belong to Don Juan Tenorio, so familiar to us in the works of Molière and Mozart.

Count Don Carlos de Maraña was one of the richest and most highly respected noblemen of Seville. He was of illustrious birth, and in the war against the Moors he gave proof that he had lost none of the courage of his ancestors. After the Alpuxarres had been reduced to submission,

he returned to Seville with a scar upon his brow and a multitude of children captured from the infidels. These he took care to have baptised, after which he sold them at a profit into Christian homes.

His wounds proved no obstacle to his winning the love of a young girl of good family, who gave him the preference over many other suitors. Of this marriage several daughters were born, some of whom married in the course of time, and the others took the vocation of religion. Don Carlos de Maraña was beginning to despair of ever having an heir, when the birth of a son overwhelmed him with joy and revived his hope that the old estate would not revert to a collateral branch of the family.

Don Juan, this son so fondly desired, and the hero of this true story, was indulged by his parents as the only son and heir to a famous name and an immense fortune should be. While still a child he was almost absolute master of his own actions and in his father's palace no one would have had the hardihood to contradict him. To be sure, his mother wished him to be pious, as she herself was, and his father desired his son to be brave like himself. The former, by means of petting and sweetmeats, succeeded in having the child learn the litany, the rosary, in fact, all the

prayers of the Church, both required and voluntary. She lulled him to sleep at night by reading religious legends. His father, on the other hand, taught his son the romances of the Cid and of Bernard del Carpio; he told him of the revolt of the Moors, and encouraged him to practise daily throwing the javelin, shooting the cross-bow or even the arquebus, at a figure dressed as a Moor which he had had made and placed at the end of the garden.

In the oratory of the Countess de Maraña was a picture painted in the heavy, severe style of Moralès, which portrayed the torments of purgatory. Every sort of punishment which the painter had been able to imagine was depicted with such realism that the torturer of the Inquisition would have found in it nothing to criticise. The souls in purgatory were represented as confined in a monstrous cavern, at the top of which was an opening. Beside this opening stood an angel, grasping the hand of a soul who was leaving this abode of sorrows, while kneeling at one side of the angel was an aged man with a chaplet in his hands, which were clasped together in an attitude of fervent prayer. This man was the donor of the picture, which he had had painted for a church in Huesca. During the revolution, the Moors had set fire to the town; the church was

burned, but the picture was miraculously preserved. The Count de Maraña had brought it home with him and had used it to embellish his wife's oratory. When little Juan entered his mother's apartment he usually stood a long time in silent contemplation before this picture, which terrified and at the same time fascinated him. There was one man especially from whom he could not turn away, a man at whose entrails a serpent seemed to gnaw, as he hung suspended by hooks caught in his side over a glowing brasier. With beseeching eyes lifted to the opening of the cave, the victim seemed to beg the donor for prayers to rescue him from such an agony of suffering. The Countess never failed to explain to her son that the unfortunate man was enduring this punishment because he had not learned his catechism, or because he had mocked at a priest, or had been inattentive in church. The soul, flying away toward Paradise, had belonged to a relative of the Maraña family. He had, no doubt, a few petty offences to expiate, but Count de Maraña had prayed for him, he had paid a great deal of money to the priests to ransom him from fire and torment, so that he had had the satisfaction of sending his relative's soul to Paradise before he had been in purgatory long enough to become tired of it.

" Nevertheless, Juanito," added the Countess, " perhaps I shall suffer like that some day, and I shall have to remain in purgatory millions of years unless you remember to have masses said to get me out! How dreadful it would be to leave in torment the mother who has cherished you!" At this the child would weep, and if he had a few coins in his pocket he would hasten to give them to the collector who took care of the money-box for the souls in purgatory.

When he visited his father's room he saw armour scarred with the indentations of arquebus-balls, a helmet which the Count de Maraña had worn at the siege of Alméria, and which bore the impress of a Mussulman's axe. Moorish lances and sabres and standards, captured from the infidels, decorated the apartment.

" This cimeter," said the Count, " I took from the Cadi de Vejer, who struck me with it three times before I took his life. This banner was carried by the rebels from the mountain of Elvire. They had just sacked a Christian village; I hurried thither with twenty knights to meet them. Four times I tried to penetrate their battalion in order to capture that standard; four times was I driven back. The fifth time I made the sign of the cross. I cried: ' Saint James!'

and plunged into the ranks of the pagans. And do you see this golden cup which I have here with my armour? A Moorish *alfaqui* had stolen it from a church in which he had been guilty of a thousand sacrileges. His horses had eaten their barley on the altar, and his soldiers had scattered the bones of the saints. The *alfaqui* was drinking sherbet from this cup, and I surprised him in his tent just as he was carrying the sacred vessel to his lips. Before he could swallow the drink or had time to say, 'Allah!' with this good sword I cut off the shaven head of the dog, and the blade sank through to the teeth. In recognition of this act of righteous vengeance the King permitted me to bear a golden cup with my armour. I tell you these things, Juanito, that you may relate it to your children, so that they may know why your coat of arms is not exactly like your grandfather's, which you see there painted beneath his portrait."

Divided between war and religion, the child passed his time in making little crosses carved from laths, or else, armed with a wooden sword, he waged war in the garden against the pumpkins, the form of which, in his opinion, bore a strong resemblance to the heads of Moors draped in their turbans.

By the time he was eighteen, Don Juan could

translate Latin only tolerably well, he could assist the priest at mass very intelligently, and he handled the rapier and the sword better than the Cid himself had done. His father, thinking that a gentleman of the house of Maraña should acquire other accomplishments than these, decided to send him to Salamanca. The preparations for the journey were soon made. His mother gave him numerous rosaries, scapulars, and medals which had been blessed by the Pope. She also taught him many prayers, which would be of special efficacy in a multitude of life's vicissitudes. His father presented him with a sword, whose hilt of damascened silver was ornamented with the family coat of arms. He said to him:

" Hitherto you have associated only with children; you are now going to live among men. Remember that the most precious possession of a gentleman is his honour; and your honour is the honour of the house of Maraña. Perish the last scion of our family rather than let a blemish stain our honour! Take this sword ; if you are attacked, it will defend you. Never be the first to draw it, but remember that no ancestor of yours ever returned his sword to the scabbard until he had conquered and was avenged."

Thus fortified with arms both spiritual and temporal, the descendant of the house of Maraña

mounted his horse and left the home of his fathers.

The University of Salamanca was at that time at the zenith of its glory. Never had its students been more numerous, never its professors more erudite; but never also had the citizens been made to suffer so much from the insolence of the unruly youths who lived, or rather who reigned in their city. Serenades, charivaris, every sort of nocturnal revelry—these were everyday occurrences, the monotony of which was relieved from time to time by an abduction of women or young girls, by a robbery or an assault and battery.

When he first arrived in Salamanca, Don Juan spent a few days presenting letters of introduction to his father's friends, calling to see his professors, visiting the churches, and examining the sacred relics which they contained. In obedience to his father's wish, he deposited with one of the professors a considerable sum of money to be distributed among the needy students. This act of liberality had a tremendous success and won him immediately a host of friends.

Don Juan was ambitious to acquire learning. He determined to hear every word that fell from the lips of his professors, as he would listen to the inspired Gospel; and he desired to sit as near the desk as possible so that not a syllable might escape

him. Entering the class-room for the first time he observed, as close to the professor as he could wish, a vacant seat, which he took. A dirty, unkempt student, clad in rags, like so many in the universities, raised his eyes from his book for a moment and stared at Don Juan with an expression of stupefied amazement.

"Are you going to take that seat?" said he, and his voice expressed something akin to terror. "Are you aware that Don Garcia Navarro usually sits there?"

Don Juan replied that he had always heard that the seats were free to the first occupant, and finding this one vacant he supposed he might take it unless Señor Don Garcia had asked his neighbour to reserve it for him.

"You are a stranger here, I can see that," said the student, "and you must have arrived very recently, since you do not know Don Garcia. I will tell you, then, that he is one of the most——"

Here the student lowered his voice as if he were afraid of being heard by the other students.

"Don Garcia is a terrible man. Woe to any one who offends him! His patience is short, but his sword is long, and you may be sure if any one sits in a place that Don Garcia has twice occupied, that is sufficient ground for a quarrel, for

he is extremely touchy and irritable. When he quarrels he strikes, and when he strikes he kills. Now then, I have warned you and you can do as you please about it."

Don Juan thought it most extraordinary that this Don Garcia should pretend to reserve the best seats for himself without taking the trouble to merit them by being punctual. At the same time he noticed that several students were staring at him, and he realised that it would be embarrassing to vacate the seat now that he had occupied it. On the other hand, he by no means wished to have a quarrel on his hands so soon after his arrival, and especially with a man so dangerous as this Don Garcia appeared to be. He was in this perplexing attitude, uncertain what to do, and still remaining instinctively where he was, when a student entered the room and came straight toward him.

"Here comes Don Garcia," said his neighbour.

This Garcia was a strapping, broad-shouldered young fellow, with swarthy complexion, a spirited eye, and a scornful expression of the mouth. He wore a shabby doublet, which once must have been black, and a ragged cloak. Outside of these garments hung a long gold chain. It is well known that from time out of mind the

students of Salamanca, and indeed, of all the Spanish universities, have considered it a point of honour to appear in rags and tatters, intending thus to demonstrate probably that genuine worth is able to dispense with the adornments which wealth can give.

Don Garcia approached the place where Don Juan was seated and greeted him with the utmost courtesy.

" Fellow-student," said he, " you have recently come among us, and yet your name is perfectly familiar to me. Our fathers have been good friends, and, if it is agreeable to you, their sons will be good friends also."

While speaking in this way, he extended his hand with the greatest cordiality. Don Juan, who was expecting an altogether different reception, met Don Garcia's politeness with a cordiality equal to his own, and replied that he should feel highly honoured by the friendship of such a gentleman as himself.

" You are not yet familiar with Salamanca," continued Don Garcia, " and if you will accept me as your guide, I shall be delighted to show you everything there is to see in this place, from the cedar even unto the hyssop." Then, turning to the student who was seated beside Don Juan: " Come, Périco, get you gone. Do you think a

booby like you ought to sit so near the Señor Don Juan de Mañara?"

And with this he pushed him roughly away, and took the seat which the student abandoned without delay.

At the close of the lecture Don Garcia gave his address to his new acquaintance and made him promise to come to see him. Then with a cordial and familiar parting salutation, he left the room, drawing about him gracefully, as he went, his cloak, which was as full of holes as a pock-marked face.

Don Juan, carrying his books under his arm, had lingered in one of the corridors of the building to examine the old inscriptions that covered the walls, when he noticed that the student who had just spoken to him was approaching, as if he also wished to look at the inscriptions. After bowing slightly, to show that he recognised him, Don Juan was about to leave, but the student touched him on his sleeve as if to stop him.

"Señor Don Juan," said he, "if you are not in a hurry, would you be good enough to grant me a moment's interview?"

"Willingly," replied Don Juan, and leaning back against a pillar, said: "I am listening."

Périco looked anxiously on all sides, as if afraid of being seen, and came very close to Don

Juan so that he might whisper, a useless precaution, it seemed, for no one but themselves was in the vast Gothic corridor. After a moment's hesitation:

"Could you tell me, Señor Don Juan," asked the student in a low and almost trembling voice, "could you tell me if your father really knew Don Garcia Navarro's father?"

Don Juan gave a start of surprise. "You heard Don Garcia say so but a moment ago."

"Yes," replied the student, speaking in a still lower tone, "but have you ever heard your father say that he was acquainted with Señor Navarro?"

"Yes, of course I have, and he was with him in the war against the Moors."

"Very well; but have you ever heard that that gentleman had a son?"

"Indeed, I have never paid much attention to what my father may have said about him. But what is the object of these questions? Is not Don Garcia Señor Navarro's son? Is he a bastard?"

"I swear before Heaven that I said nothing of the kind," cried the terrified student, peering behind the column against which Don Juan was leaning. "I only meant to ask whether you had heard an extraordinary story that many people tell about this Don Garcia?"

" I have never heard a word of it," said Don Juan.

" It is said—mark that I only repeat what I have heard—it is said that Don Diego Navarro had a son who, when he was six or seven years old, fell ill of so strange and serious a malady that the physicians did not know what remedies to administer. Then the father, who had no other child, sent rich gifts to many churches, and carried the sick boy to touch the sacred relics, but all in vain. At last one day, in despair, I have been assured—one day while he was looking at a picture of Saint Michel he exclaimed: ' Since you are unable to cure my son, I'll see whether the person under your feet has not more power than you.' "

" What abominable blasphemy!" cried Don Juan, scandalised to the last degree.

" After a little while the child recovered—and that child was—is Don Garcia!"

" So ever since then Don Garcia has been the devil incarnate," said Don Garcia himself, shouting with laughter, appearing at this moment from behind a pillar, where he must have overheard the conversation.

" Indeed, Périco," said he coldly and scornfully to the terror-stricken student, " if you were not such a sneaking coward, I should make you repent your audacity in speaking of me. Señor

Don Juan," he continued, speaking to Maraña, " when you are better acquainted with us, you will not waste your time listening to this gossip. And, see here, to prove that I am not such a devil of a fellow, do me the honour to accompany me at once to Saint Peter's Church; after we have concluded our devotions there I shall invite you to join me and several of my comrades at a poor dinner."

At these words he took Don Juan's arm. The latter, mortified that he had been surprised listening to Périco's strange story, accepted with alacrity the invitation of his new friend to prove that the scandal he had just heard had made no impression upon him.

After entering the church of Saint Peter, Don Juan and Don Garcia knelt before an altar, around which were gathered an immense crowd of the faithful. Don Juan repeated his prayers in a low tone; and, although he remained a suitable length of time in this pious occupation, he found when he raised his head that his comrade seemed to be still lost in religious ecstasy; his lips were moving softly; he was evidently not half through with his devotions. Somewhat ashamed of having finished so soon, Don Juan began to recite in a whisper all the litanies that he could recall. The litanies despatched, Don Garcia had

not budged. Don Juan went mechanically through several minor prayers; then, seeing that his companion had not yet stirred, he thought it would be permissible for him to look round about him a little to pass the time while waiting for the termination of this unending orison. Three women who were kneeling upon Turkish rugs immediately attracted his attention. One, judging from her age, her spectacles, and the venerable amplitude of her head-dress, could be no other than the duenna. The other two were young and pretty, and did not bow their eyes so low over their beads that they might not be seen to be large and brilliant. Don Juan found it delightful to look at one especially; more delightful, indeed, than it ought to have been in such a holy place. Forgetting his comrade's prayers, he nudged him on the arm, and asked in a whisper who was the young lady who carried a chaplet of amber beads.

Don Garcia did not seem at all shocked at the interruption, and replied:

" She is Doña Teresa de Ojeda; and the other one is Doña Fausta, her elder sister, daughters of an Auditor of the Court of Castile. I am in love with the elder; see if you can't fall in love with the younger sister. See," he added, " they are just rising and are going to leave the church; let us hurry and see them get into their carriage; per-

haps the wind will blow their skirts so that we may catch a glimpse of one or two pretty ankles."

Don Juan was so intoxicated by the beauty of Doña Teresa that he did not notice the coarseness of this language, and following Don Garcia to the church door he watched the two young noblewomen enter their coach and drive away from the church square, whence they turned into one of the most fashionable streets. After disappearing around the corner Don Garcia, jamming his hat on his head sidewise, cried gaily:

"There go two charming girls! Damn me, if the elder isn't mine before the end of the week! And how about you, have you made any progress with the younger?"

"What! Progress?" answered Don Juan, innocently. "Why, this is the first time I ever saw her!"

"A good reason, to be sure!" exclaimed Don Garcia. "How much longer do you suppose I have known Doña Fausta? To-day, however, I sent her a note which she took very kindly."

"A note? But I did not see you write one!"

"I always carry them with me ready written; so long as no name is attached they will serve for any one. Only be careful not to use compromising allusions to the colour of one's hair or eyes. So long as you keep to sighs and tears and

fears, all of them, brunettes or blondes, young girls or married women, will take them in good part!"

With chatter of this kind Don Garcia and Don Juan reached the house where dinner awaited them. It was a popular resort of the students and the food was more plentiful than elegant and varied. There was no end of highly seasoned stews and salt meats; all kinds of food to excite thirst. There was, besides, an abundance of wines from La Manche and Andalusia. Several students, friends of Don Garcia, were waiting for him to come. They sat down at the table immediately, and for some time no other sounds were heard but the crunching of food and the jingle of the glasses striking against the decanters. After a while the wine having put the diners in a good humour, conversation began and became loud and boisterous. The talk was of nothing but duels, love affairs, and student escapades. One told how he had gotten the better of his landlady by moving out the night before the day when his rent was due. Another had ordered from a wine merchant several bottles of *valdepenas* in the name of one of the most austere professors in the School of Theology; he had been cunning enough to confiscate the bottles, leaving the professor to settle the account if he wished. One had as-

saulted the watchman; another, by means of a ladder, had made a visit to his mistress, notwithstanding the watchfulness of a jealous lover. Don Juan at first listened in dismay to the recital of all this licentiousness, but by degrees the effect of the wine which he was drinking and the hilarity of the diners disarmed his prudery. He laughed at the stories that were told, and he came to the point even of envying the reputation enjoyed by several for their feats of trickery and swindling. He began to lose sight of the wise principles which he had brought to the university, and to approve of the rule of conduct followed by the students; a simple rule and one easy to obey. It consisted of assuming the right of committing any act of depredation against the *philistines;* that is to say, all that part of the human species which has not matriculated in the university. The student in the midst of the *philistines* is in hostile territory, and he considers himself justified in treating them exactly as the Hebrews treated the Canaanites. The only difficulty is that the *corregidor* has, unfortunately, very little respect for the sacred customs of the university, and asks nothing better than an opportunity to maltreat its votaries. It follows, therefore, that they must stand together as brothers; that they must aid one another, and above all that they

must keep inviolate the secrets of their fellow-students.

This edifying conversation continued as long as the bottles held out. At last, when they were empty, there was a lamentable confusion of judgment on the part of all the guests and a strong desire to sleep.

The sun still shining high in the heavens, every one went home to enjoy a siesta, but Don Juan accepted the invitation of Don Garcia to rest at his house. No sooner had he thrown himself on a leather couch than fatigue and the fumes of the wine overcame him and he fell into a deep sleep. For some time his dreams were so fantastic and so hazy that his only sensation was one of vague discomfort, with no idea of any object or fancy that might cause it. Gradually, however, he began to see more clearly in his dream, if it may be expressed thus, and his ideas became coherent. He thought he was in a boat on a great river, broader and wider than he had ever seen the Guadalquivir in winter. This boat was without either sails, oars, or rudder, and the shore on each side was deserted. The boat was tossed here and there by the waves, so that he was ill, and thought himself at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, just at the time when the good-for-nothings of Seville, who are taking a trip to Cadiz, feel the first inti-

mation of sea-sickness. Soon he found himself where the river was much calmer, so that he could easily see the two banks and his voice could even be heard at that distance. Then there appeared at the same instant on each shore, two radiant figures, each moving toward him as if to bring him succour. He turned at first to the right bank and saw an old man of solemn and austere countenance, barefooted and without clothes other than a mantle of thorns. He seemed to stretch out his hand to Don Juan. On the left, where he then looked, he saw a woman, tall and of most noble and engaging appearance, holding in her hand a crown of flowers, which she offered to him. At the same time he observed that his boat, though oarless, was guided at his pleasure by the force of his will. He was moving toward the bank where the woman stood, intending to land there, when a cry from the left bank caused him to turn around and sail his boat in that direction. The expression of the old man was even sterner than it was at first. Wherever his body was visible it was seen to be covered with wounds and bruises, livid and angry. In one hand he held a crown of thorns, in the other a whip filled with iron spikes. Don Juan was overcome with terror at this spectacle, and quickly he turned his boat once more toward the right bank of the river. The vision

which had charmed him before was still there. Her hair was wafted in the breeze, a supernatural lustre animated her eyes, and instead of the crown she now held in her hand a sword. Don Juan hesitated for a moment before landing his boat, and then, looking more attentively, he saw that the blade of the sword was crimson with blood and that the nymph's hand also was red. Terrified, he awoke with a start. He opened his eyes and could not repress a cry when he saw two feet from his bed a glittering sword. But no lovely nymph was it that held the sword. Don Garcia was on the point of arousing his friend, and noticing near the bed a sword of curious workmanship, was examining it with the air of a connoisseur. On the blade was this inscription: "Maintain loyalty." And the hilt, as we have already said, bore the arms, the name, and the device of the house of Maraña.

"This is a handsome sword of yours, comrade," said Don Garcia. "You must be rested by this time. It is now night, let us walk for a little while, and after the good people of the town have gone to their homes, we will go, if it pleases you, and serenade our divinities."

Don Juan and Don Garcia strolled for some time along the Tormes, staring at the women who came out to get the air or to ogle their lovers.

Little by little the promenaders became rarer, then they disappeared altogether.

" Now is the time," said Don Garcia, " now is the time when the entire city belongs to the students. The *philistines* would not dare to interrupt us in our innocent recreations. As for the watchman, if, by some accident, we were to have a skirmish with him, I need not tell you that he is a rascal who need not be spared. But if the scoundrels are too many for us and we should have to take to our heels, you need have no anxiety. I know all the by-ways. You need only give yourself the trouble to follow me, and you may be sure that all will go well."

As he spoke he threw his cloak over his left shoulder in such a way as to conceal the greater part of his face but to leave his right arm free. Don Juan did the same, and both proceeded toward the street in which Doña Fausta and her sister lived. In passing the steps of a church Don Garcia whistled. A page appeared with a guitar, which Don Garcia took and then dismissed the boy.

" I see," said Don Juan, as they turned into the Calle de Valladolid, " I see that you intend to have me act as a protector to your serenade. You may be certain that I shall conduct myself so as to deserve your approval. I should be disowned

by Seville, my own country, if I did not know how to guard a street against intruders."

"I have no intention of giving you sentinel's duty to perform," replied Don Garcia. "I have my own love affair to attend to here, and you have yours also. Let each pursue his own game. Hush! this is the house. You at that window and I at this one, and take care!"

Don Garcia, after tuning his guitar, began in a rather pleasing voice to sing a ballad, which, as usual, was full of tears and sighs and all the rest. I do not know whether or not he was the composer of the song. At the third or fourth stanza the blinds of two windows were softly raised and a low cough was heard. This signified that some one was listening. Musicians, they say, never play when they are begged or when people listen to them. Don Garcia rested his guitar against a pillar, and in a low voice he entered into conversation with one of the women who had heard him sing.

Don Juan, glancing upward, saw at the window immediately above him a woman who seemed to be observing him intently. He had no doubt that it was Doña Fausta's sister, whom his own inclination and his friend's choice had granted him as the lady of his thoughts. But he was still timid and inexperienced and he did not know how

to begin. Suddenly a handkerchief fluttered out of the window and a low, soft voice cried:

"Ah! Jesús! my handkerchief has fallen out!"

Don Juan hastened to pick it up, placed it on the point of his sword and lifted it to the height of the window. This was an opening. The voice began by thanking him, and then asked if the Señor who had been so very courteous had not been that morning to Saint Peter's Church. Don Juan replied that he had been there and that he had in consequence lost his peace of mind.

"How is that?"

"Because I saw you there."

The ice was broken. Don Juan was from Seville and knew by heart all the Moorish romances in which the passionate tongue is so rich. He could not fail to be eloquent. The conversation continued for nearly an hour. Finally Teresa exclaimed that she heard her father coming and must leave the window. The two gallants lingered in the street until they saw appear from behind the curtain two white hands, which threw from the window a spray of jessamine to each of them. When Don Juan fell asleep that night his head was clouded with delicious images. Don Garcia spent the greater part of the night in a tavern.

The next night the sighs and the serenades were repeated, and continued for several successive nights. After refusing a becoming length of time, both ladies consented to give and to accept a lock of hair, an operation which was conducted by means of a cord dropped from the window, which brought back the token given in exchange. Don Garcia, who was not a man to stop at trifles, suggested a ladder or even skeleton keys, but they considered him bold, and his proposition, if not rejected, was at least indefinitely postponed.

For almost a month Don Juan and Don Garcia had billed and cooed to no purpose under their lady-loves' windows. One very dark night they were on duty as usual, and the conversation had continued for some time to the satisfaction of all concerned, when at the far end of the street appeared, in long cloaks, seven or eight men, half of whom carried musical instruments.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Teresa, "here is Don Cristoval coming to serenade us. Withdraw at once, for the love of God, or some misfortune will happen."

"We do not yield so good a place to any man," cried Don Garcia; and raising his voice: "Señor," he said to the foremost man, "this place is taken, and besides, these ladies do not care to

hear your music; so, if it pleases you, go elsewhere to seek your fate."

"This is one of those student jackanapes pretending to hinder us from passing!" cried Don Cristoval. "I'll teach him what it costs to make love to my sweethearts!"

At these words he unsheathed his sword. Instantly the swords of two of his companions flashed from their scabbards. Don Garcia, with admirable celerity, flinging his mantle around his arm, drew his sword and cried: "Follow me, students!" But there was not a student in the neighbourhood. The musicians, fearing, doubtless, that their instruments would be broken in the scuffle, took to their heels, calling for the guards as they ran, while the two women at the window invoked the aid of all the saints of Paradise.

Don Juan, who happened to be under the window nearest Don Cristoval, at first had to defend himself against him. His adversary was skilful, and moreover, in his left hand he had an iron shield which he could use as a parry, while Don Juan had nothing but his sword and his mantle. Hard pressed by Don Cristoval, he recalled opportunely a thrust taught him by Señor Uberti, his fencing-master. He let himself drop to the ground, supporting himself by his left hand while with his right hand he slipped his sword under

Don Cristoval's shield and thrust it into his body outside the ribs with such force that the blade was broken after penetrating a hand's-length. Don Cristoval uttered one cry and fell, bathed in his own blood. During this encounter, which consumed less time than it takes to tell it, Don Garcia was defending himself successfully against his two adversaries, who no sooner saw their chief lying on the pavement, than they fled as fast as their legs would carry them.

"We must get out of the way at once," said Don Garcia. "This is no time to dally. Good-bye, my beauties!"

He lost no time in escaping, dragging after him Don Juan, who was completely bewildered by the deed he had committed. When they had gone about twenty steps Don Garcia stopped to ask his companion what he had done with his sword.

"My sword?" said Don Juan, noticing only at that instant that it was no longer in his hand. "I don't know—I must have dropped it."

"Malediction!" cried Don Garcia. "And your name is engraved on the scabbard!"

At this moment men with torches were seen to come from some of the houses in the neighbourhood, and to crowd around the dying man. A company of armed men were walking rapidly

from the other direction, evidently a patrol attracted by the outcries of the musicians and by the tumult of the fight.

Pulling his hat over his eyes and throwing his cloak over the lower part of his face to avoid recognition and regardless of the danger, Don Garcia rushed in among the men, hoping to find the sword, which would have undoubtedly identified the murderer. Don Juan saw him strike right and left, putting out the lights and overturning all who happened to be in his path. He reappeared soon, running as fast as he could, and holding a sword in each hand, the entire patrol pursuing him.

"Ah! Don Garcia," exclaimed Don Juan, taking the sword held out to him, "how can I ever thank you!"

"Let us fly, fly!" cried Don Garcia. "Follow me, and if one of those rascals presses you too closely stick him as you did the other one just now."

Both then started to run with all the speed imparted by their physical vigour, augmented by fear of the *corregidor*, an officer who was much more formidable to the students than to thieves.

Don Garcia, who knew Salamanca as well as he knew his *Deus det,* was remarkably skilful in rushing around the street corners and in dashing

through the narrow alleys, while his companion, inexperienced in such exercise, followed him only with the greatest difficulty. Breath was beginning to fail them when, at the end of a street, they met a number of students out for a walk, singing and playing on the guitar as they strolled along. No sooner did the latter realise that two of their fellow-students were pursued than they seized rocks, cudgels, and every sort of available weapon. The constables, breathless from their chase, did not consider themselves in proper condition to force a skirmish. Prudently they went their own way, while the two culprits entered a church near by for a few moments' rest and protection.

At the threshold Don Juan stopped to return his sword to the scabbard, considering it neither seemly nor Christian to enter the house of God with a weapon in his hand. But the sheath resisted, the blade could scarcely be pushed into it, and he then discovered that the sword which he held in his hand was not his. Don Garcia, in his haste, had snatched the first sword which he had found on the ground, and it had belonged to the dead man, or to one of his associates. The situation was serious. Don Juan told his companion, whom he had come to regard as his counsellor. Don Garcia frowned, bit his lips, and twisted the

edge of his hat as he walked up and down, while Don Juan, wholly stunned by the vexatious discovery he had just made, was overcome with anxiety no less than remorse. After spending a quarter of an hour in reflection, during which Don Garcia had the good grace not to say once: "Why did you let your sword fall?" he took Don Juan by the arm and said:

"Come along. I have it."

Just at this instant a priest was leaving the vestry-room on his way toward the street. Don Garcia stopped him.

"Have I not the honour of speaking to the learned Doctor Gomez?" he said with a profound bow.

"I am not yet a doctor," replied the priest, evidently flattered at the mistake. "I am Manuel Tordoya, at your service."

"Father," Don Garcia continued, "you are precisely the person to whom I wished to speak; it is about a case of conscience, and if rumour has not deceived me, you are the author of the famous treatise, *De casibus conscientiæ,* which has made such a stir in Madrid?"

The priest, yielding to the sin of vanity, stammered that he was not the author of the book mentioned (which, truth to tell, had never been written), but that he was deeply interested in such

matters. Don Garcia, who had his own reasons for not caring to listen to the priest, went on thus:

"This, Father, in a word, is the matter about which I desired to consult you. This very day, less than an hour ago, a friend of mine was accosted on the street by a man, who said to him: '*Caballero,* I am about to fight a duel a few steps from here, and my opponent's sword is longer than my own. Will you have the kindness to lend me yours, so that the weapons may be equally matched?' My friend exchanged swords with him. He waited for a while at the street corner until the duel should be over; then no longer hearing the clashing of swords, he drew near, and what did he see? A man lying dead, run through by the very sword he had just lent. Since then he has not known a moment's peace; he reproaches himself for his act of kindness, and fears he has been guilty of a mortal sin. I have endeavoured to reassure him. I believe the sin is pardonable, for the reason that if he had refused to lend his sword he would have been responsible for a duel between two men with unmatched weapons. What do you think about it, Father? Are you not of my opinion?"

The priest, who was a student of casuistry, pricked up his ears at this story, and for some time he rubbed his forehead like a man who tries

to recall a quotation. Don Juan had no idea what Don Garcia was driving at, but he kept silent for fear of committing an awkward blunder.

" Father," continued Don Garcia, " the question must be very difficult to decide since so learned a man as you hesitates to settle it. With your permission we will return to-morrow to learn your opinion. In the meantime may I beg that you will have the goodness to say a few masses for the soul of the dead man? "

With these words, he placed two or three ducats in the priest's hand, which put the finishing touch on his favourable inclination toward these young men, who were so devout, so conscientious, and, above all, so generous. He assured them that the following day, in the same place, he would deliver his opinion in writing. Don Garcia was lavish in thanking him; then he added unconcernedly, as if it were a matter of small importance:

" Provided the law does not hold us responsible for the man's death! We shall rely on you to reconcile us with God."

" As to the law," said the priest, " you have nothing to fear from that source. Having merely lent his sword, your friend can not be held legally as an accomplice."

" Yes, Father, but the murderer has escaped.

They will examine the wound, perhaps they will find the blood-stained sword. How can I tell? Lawyers are dreadful people, they say."

"But," said the priest, "you were an eye-witness, were you not, that the sword was borrowed?"

"Certainly," replied Don Garcia, "I would swear to it before every court in the kingdom. Moreover," he continued, in his most insinuating tone, "You, Father, would be there to testify to the truth. Long before the affair became known, we applied to you to seek spiritual counsel. You could even bear witness to the exchange. Here is the proof of it." He then took the sword from Don Juan.

"Just look at this sword," said he, "see how it looks in this scabbard!"

The priest nodded his head as if convinced of the truth of the story he had just heard. In silence, he weighed the ducats which he held in his hand, and he found them an unanswerable argument in favour of the two young men.

"Yet, after all, Father," said Don Garcia piously, "what matters the law to us? It is rather with heaven that we wish to be reconciled."

"Good-bye, my children, until to-morrow," said the priest, withdrawing.

"Until to-morrow," replied Don Garcia; "we kiss your hands and rely upon you."

After the priest had gone Don Garcia jumped for joy.

"Hurrah for simony!" he cried. "We are all right now, I hope. If the law becomes uneasy about you, this good Father, in consideration of the ducats he has already received, and those he hopes still to extract from us, is ready to certify that we are as ignorant of the death of the caballero, whom you have just despatched, as a new-born babe. Go home now, be on the look-out constantly, and open your door only for good reasons. I am going about town to hear what I can."

When Don Juan reached his room he threw himself on the bed, dressed just as he was. He passed a sleepless night, thinking of nothing but the murder he had just committed, and especially of its consequences. Every time he heard footsteps in the street he thought it was the officers coming to arrest him. However, overcome with fatigue, and with brain still dull from the effects of the students' dinner, he fell asleep just as the sun was rising.

He had slept several hours, when he was awakened by his servant, who told him that a lady, closely veiled, wished to see him. Even

while he was speaking a woman entered the room. She was enveloped from head to foot in a long black cloak which left visible only one eye. This eye she turned toward the servant, then toward Don Juan, in mute petition that she might speak to him alone. The servant at once left the room. The lady sat down, with her whole attention fixed on Don Juan. After a moment's hesitation, she began as follows:

"Señor Caballero, my conduct is, no doubt, surprising, and you must have a very poor opinion of me, but if my object in coming here were known, I am sure I would not be blamed. Last night you fought with a señor of this city . . ."

"I, Madam!" cried Don Juan, turning pale; "I did not leave this room——".

"It is useless to attempt to deceive me, and I shall have to set you an example in candour." With this she threw off her cloak, and Don Juan recognised Doña Teresa.

"Señor Don Juan," she continued, with a blush, "I must acknowledge that your courage has excited my deepest interest in you. Notwithstanding my own agitation, I noticed that you had broken your sword, and that you had dropped it very near our door. While they were busily occupied with the wounded man, I hurried

out and picked up the hilt of the sword. When I examined it and read your name I realised the danger to which you would be exposed if it were to fall into the hands of your enemies. Here it is. I am very happy to be able to return it to you."

Instinctively Don Juan threw himself at her feet, saying that he owed her his life, but that it was a useless gift, since she would make him die of love. Doña Teresa was in great haste and must depart at once. Nevertheless, she listened with such pleasure to the appeals of Don Juan, that she could not make up her mind to leave. Nearly an hour passed thus, with vows of eternal love, kisses showered upon her hand, entreaties on the one side and refusal on the other. Don Garcia, entering the room suddenly, interrupted the *tête-à-tête*. He was not the sort of man to be easily shocked. His first care was to reassure Teresa. He praised her courage and her presence of mind, and ended by begging her to intercede with her sister in order to obtain for him a more favourable reception. Doña Teresa promised to do what she could. She wrapped herself hermetically in her cloak and departed with the assurance that she and her sister would be found that evening on a certain part of the promenade.

" All is well," said Don Garcia, as soon as the

two young men were alone. "No one suspects you. The magistrate at first honoured me with his suspicions. He was confident, he said, that I was the man who killed Don Cristoval. What do you suppose made him change his mind? He was informed that I had been with you the whole night; and you, my dear, have such a reputation for sanctity, that you have enough to spare for others too. However that may be, we are not suspected. The stratagem of that brave little Teresa assures our safety for the future, so let us think no more of the affair, and consider only the question of amusing ourselves."

"Ah! Garcia," exclaimed Don Juan sadly, "it is a dreadful thing to kill a fellow-man!"

"There is something still more dreadful," responded Don Garcia, "and that is that one of our fellow-men should kill us, and a third thing, which is even more dreadful than the other two, is to spend a day without any dinner. This is the reason I invite you to dine to-day with several jolly fellows, who will be delighted to see you."

With these words he left the room.

Love was already making powerful attacks upon our hero's remorse, and vanity completed its extinction. The students with whom he dined at Garcia's rooms had learned through that worthy the actual murderer of Don Cristoval.

This Cristoval was a cavalier, famous for his courage and his duplicity, and feared by the students; hence his death only excited their good-humour, and his successful opponent was overwhelmed with compliments. In their toasts he was the honour, the choicest flower, the right arm of the university. His health was drunk with enthusiasm, and a student of Murcie composed a sonnet in his praise, in which he was compared to the Cid, and to Bernard del Carpio. When he rose from the table, Don Juan's heart was still a little heavy in his bosom, but if he had had the power to bring Don Cristoval to life again, it is extremely doubtful whether he would have done it, for fear of losing the importance and the renown which the death of this man had won for him throughout all the university.

When evening came both parties were prompt at the rendezvous, which took place on the bank of the Tormes. Doña Teresa held Don Juan's hand (it was not yet customary for a woman to take a man's arm), and Doña Fausta Don Garcia's. After several turns up and down the promenade, the two couples separated, well satisfied, and with mutual promises to meet as often as possible.

After parting from the two sisters they came upon several gipsy girls dancing and

playing the tambourine, the centre of a group of students. They joined the crowd. Don Garcia was taken with the dancers, and he decided to invite them to supper. The proposition was immediately made and accepted without hesitation. In his character of *fidus Achates,* Don Juan made one of the party. Piqued because a girl said that he acted like a monk, he set about doing all that he could to prove this title a misnomer; he swore, he danced, he gambled and drank as much as any two second-year students could have done.

His companions had considerable difficulty in taking him home after midnight, for he was in such a state of tipsiness and madness that he wanted to set fire to Salamanca, and then to drink all the water of the Tormes, to prevent the fire from being extinguished.

Thus, one after another, Don Juan lost all the admirable qualities with which he was endowed by nature and by training. After living in Salamanca three months, under the tutelage of Don Garcia, he had succeeded in seducing poor Teresa, and his comrade had been equally successful with her sister, eight or ten days earlier. Don Juan at first loved his mistress with all the ardour that a boy of his age is capable of feeling toward the first woman who accepts his

advances; but Don Garcia had little difficulty in demonstrating that constancy was a chimerical virtue; moreover, that if he conducted himself differently from his comrades in their university orgies, Teresa's reputation would suffer. For, said he, only a violent passion and one that is requited is contented with one woman. Not only this, but the evil associations into which Don Juan had fallen, left him not a moment of quiet. He seldom appeared in the class-room, or, when he was present, exhausted as he was by midnight revels and by debauchery, he dozed through the lectures of the most brilliant professors. On the other hand, he was always the first to reach and the last to leave the promenade; and the nights that Teresa was unable to devote to him were spent regularly at the tavern, or at worse places.

One morning he had received a note from his lady expressing her regret not to be able to keep an appointment for that night. An aged relative had just arrived, and Teresa's bed-chamber had been given her. She herself, meanwhile, would share her mother's room. Don Juan felt little disappointment, for he had other ways to spend his evening. Just as he was starting out, absorbed in his plans, a veiled woman brought him a note; it was from Teresa. She had suc-

ceeded in having another room for herself, and everything was arranged with her sister for a rendezvous. Don Juan showed the note to Don Garcia; for some time they hesitated; finally, from force of habit, mechanically they climbed up to their mistresses' balcony, and visited them.

Doña Teresa had on her neck a mole, which was somewhat conspicuous. Don Juan had considered it a great privilege the first time he had received permission to look at it. For some time he continued to regard it as the most fascinating thing in the world. He compared it sometimes to a violet. Sometimes to an anemone, and again to an alfalfa blossom. But before long, this mole, which was really very pretty, ceased, by satiety, to appear so to him. "It is a big, black spot, that is all," he said to himself, with a sigh. "What a pity that it should be there. By Jove, but it looks like the birthmark of a pig!" One day he even asked Teresa if she had never consulted a physician as to some means of removing it. Blushing to the roots of her hair, the poor girl replied that no man except himself had ever seen the mole, and besides, her nurse had always told her that it was a sign of good luck.

On the evening in question Don Juan, who had come to Teresa in a bad humour, again saw the mole, which looked larger than ever before.

"The devil," he said to himself, looking at it, "it is the image of a big rat. Indeed, it is a deformity. It is a sign of condemnation as was the mark of Cain. The devil must have influenced me to make such a woman my mistress." He was as disagreeable as possible. He quarrelled without cause with poor Teresa, made her weep, and just before dawn left her without a kiss. Don Garcia, who accompanied him, walked some distance in silence; then, stopping short:

"Now, own up, Don Juan," said he, "that this night has been a great bore. So far as I am concerned, I have had enough of it, and I have a great mind to send the dear creature to the devil, once for all!"

"You are wholly wrong," said Don Juan; "Fausta is charming, fair as a swan, and she is always in good-humour, and then, how she loves you! I tell you, you are a lucky fellow."

"Fair, to be sure. I grant you that she is fair. Why, she has no colour at all, and beside her sister, she looks like an owl near a dove. It is you who are lucky."

"Ah, so, so," responded Don Juan; "the little thing is nice enough, but she is such a child. It is impossible to talk sensibly with her. Her head is crammed with chivalric romances, and

she has the most extraordinary ideas about love. You can not imagine how unreasonable she is."

"The trouble, Don Juan, is that you are too young and do not know how to treat your mistresses. A woman, you see, is like a horse; if you allow her to form bad habits, or if you do not let her understand that you will not put up with her whims, you will never make anything of her."

"Tell me, Don Garcia, do you treat your mistresses as you do your horses? Do you often use the whip to cure them of their caprices?"

"Not often; but I am too kind-hearted. Look here, Don Juan, if you'll let me have your Teresa, I'll promise that at the end of two weeks she will be as yielding as a glove. I offer you Fausta in exchange. Do you want anything to boot?"

"The trade would suit me admirably," said Don Juan, smiling, "if the ladies themselves would agree to it. But Doña Fausta would never consent to give you up. She would lose too much by the exchange."

"You are too modest. But take courage. I made her so angry last night that the first comer now would seem like an angel of light to a soul that is damned. Do you know, Don Juan," continued Don Garcia, "that I am speaking seriously?"

Don Juan laughed more than ever at the earnest manner in which his friend gave out these extravagant ideas.

This edifying conversation was interrupted by the arrival of several students, who turned their thoughts in another channel. But in the evening, when the two friends were seated before a bottle of Montilla and a little basket of Valencian acorns, Don Garcia began again to find fault with his mistress. He had just received a letter from Fausta, full of expressions of affection and gentle reproaches, through all of which penetrated her merry wit, and her habit of seeing the ridiculous side of things.

"See here," said Don Garcia, giving the letter to Don Juan, with a deep yawn. "Read this sweet morsel. She wants to see me again tonight! But I'll be damned if I go."

Don Juan read the letter, which seemed to him enchanting.

"Indeed," said he, "if I had a mistress like yours, it would be my whole aim to make her happy."

"Take her then, my dear," cried Don Garcia, "take her and cure yourself of the fancy. I resign in your favour. Better still," he added, as if illumined by a sudden inspiration, "let us play for our mistresses. Here are the cards, we

will play ombre. Doña Fausta is my stake; and now you put Doña Teresa on the table."

Don Juan, laughing to the point of tears at his comrade's folly, took the cards and shuffled them, and although he gave almost no attention to the game, he won. Don Garcia felt, apparently, no regret at the loss of the game. He asked for writing materials and made out a bill of exchange, drawn on Doña Fausta, whom he ordered to place herself at the disposition of the bearer, exactly as he would have written to his steward to pay ten ducats to one of his creditors.

Don Juan, laughing still, offered to play another game with Don Garcia, but the latter declined.

"If you have any pluck," said he, "take my cloak and go to the little door that you know. You will find only Fausta there, since Teresa does not expect you. Follow her in, without speaking. Once in her room, she may be surprised for a moment, she may even shed one or two tears; but you need not mind that. You may be sure that she will not dare to make an outcry. Then show her my letter, tell her that I am a horrible villain, a monster of iniquity, anything you will. Say to her that she has at hand an easy means of retaliation, and you may be cer-

tain that this retaliation she will accept with alacrity."

At every word of Garcia, the devil took fuller possession of Don Juan's heart, persuading him that what he had until that moment regarded as an aimless joke might be realised in accordance with his own wish. He ceased laughing, and the flush of sensuality mounted on his brow.

"If I were perfectly sure," said he, "that Fausta would consent to the exchange . . ."

"If she will consent!" cried the libertine. "What a greenhorn you are, to suppose that a woman would hesitate between a six months' lover and a new one! Depend upon it, you will both thank me to-morrow. I'll wager you, and all I ask in return is to have your permission to make up to Teresita."

Then, seeing Don Juan still half undecided, he went on: "Make up your mind, for I do not intend to see Fausta to-night; and if you do not care to go, I shall give this note to big Fadrique, and the prize will be his."

"Very well! Come what may!" exclaimed Don Juan, seizing the note; and to strengthen his courage he swallowed at one draught a full glass of Montilla.

The appointed time approached. Don Juan, who had still a few remaining scruples, drank

one glass after another of wine to stifle them. At last the clock struck. Don Garcia threw his mantle over Don Juan's shoulders, and went with him to his mistress's door; then giving the signal, he wished Don Juan good-night, and left him without the slightest pang of remorse for the wicked act he had committed.

The door opened immediately. Doña Fausta had been waiting some time.

"Is it you, Don Garcia?" she asked in a whisper.

"Yes," responded Don Juan, still lower, his face hidden in the folds of the large cloak. He entered and the door closed. He began to ascend a dark stairway with his guide.

"Take the corner of my mantilla," she said, "and follow me as quickly as you can."

A few moments later he found himself in Fausta's room. It was dimly lighted by a single lamp. Without removing his hat and not yet daring to make himself known, Don Juan remained standing near the door. For some time Doña Fausta looked at him silently, then suddenly came toward him with outstretched arms. Don Juan threw off his cloak, and advanced to meet her.

"What! You! Señor Don Juan?" she cried. "Is Don Garcia ill?"

"Ill? No," said Don Juan. "But he can not come. He sent me to tell you."

"Oh! how sorry I am! But, tell me, it is not another woman, is it, that keeps him from coming?"

"You know what a rake he is then——?"

"How glad my sister will be to see you! Poor child, she thought you would not come. Allow me to pass, and I will go and tell her."

"It is useless."

"There is something peculiar in your manner, Don Juan. You have some bad news to tell me . . . Has any misfortune happened to Don Garcia?"

To be spared the embarrassment of a reply, he handed the poor girl Don Garcia's infamous letter. She read it hastily without taking in its meaning. Then she read it again, and could not believe her eyes. Don Juan was observing her closely: she wiped away the sweat from her brow; she rubbed her eyes; her lips trembled; a deadly pallor overspread her face, and she was obliged to hold the paper with both hands, else it would have dropped to the floor. At last, with a desperate effort, rising, she cried out:

"Every word is false! It is a horrible forgery! Don Garcia never wrote that!"

Don Juan replied:

"You know his handwriting. He did not appreciate the value of the treasure that was his —and I have accepted it because I adore you."

The glance she gave him expressed the utmost scorn; then she fixed her attention on the letter like a lawyer who suspects some falsification in a deed. She gazed with eyes staring fixedly at the paper. Now and again a tear escaped from the motionless eyelids and fell upon her cheek.

Suddenly smiling in a senseless way, she cried:

"It is a joke, is it not? It is a joke! Don Garcia is out there and he is coming now!"

"It is not a joke, Doña Fausta. No fact is truer than that I love you. I shall be most miserable if you do not believe me."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Doña Fausta. "But, if what you say is true, you are even a greater scoundrel than Don Garcia."

"All is fair in love, beautiful Faustita. Don Garcia has abandoned you; let me console you. I see painted here on this panel Bacchus and Ariadne; let me be your Bacchus."

Without a word in reply, she seized a knife that lay on the table and lifting it high above her head, advanced toward Don Juan. But he had understood her action, and grasping her wrist, easily disarmed her; then believing him-

self warranted in punishing her for the way she had opened hostilities, he kissed her several times and tried to force her toward a low couch. Doña Fausta was a slight, delicate woman, but anger gave her strength to resist Don Juan, now by clinging to the furniture, now by defending herself with hands, feet, and teeth. Don Juan at first received her blows with some amusement, but before long anger was as strong within his soul as love, and he held her forcibly in his grasp, untroubled by any fear of bruising the tender skin. He was now enraged and determined, at any cost, to triumph over his opponent, ready to choke her, if need be, to bring her to submission. Fausta then had recourse to her last expedient. Until then, a feeling of modesty had restrained her from calling for help, but realising that she was about to be overpowered, she made the house ring with her shrieks.

Don Juan then understood that it was no longer a question of mastering his victim, but rather must he think of safety in escape. He made an effort to repulse Fausta, and reach the door, but she clung to his clothes and he could not throw her off. At the same time was heard the ominous sound of opening doors, steps, and men's voices coming nearer; there was not a minute to lose. He made a final effort to free

himself from Doña Fausta's grasp, but she seized his doublet with such violence that he was whirled around and nothing was gained except that their positions were reversed. Fausta was now next to the door, which opened within. She continued her shrieks. Just then the door opened. A man holding an arquebus appeared on the threshold. He uttered an exclamation of surprise, and immediately a shot was heard. The lamp was extinguished and Don Juan felt Doña Fausta's hands loosen their hold, and something warm and liquid running over his own hands. She fell, or rather, she glided to the floor; the ball had shattered her spine; instead of killing her betrayer, it had killed her. Discovering that he was free, Don Juan dashed through the smoke of the arquebus to the stairway. He received a blow from the butt of the weapon, and one of the servants inflicted a sword-thrust, but neither injured him seriously. Drawing his sword, he sought to cut a way for himself and to put out the torch which the lackey held, but the latter, intimidated by Don Juan's boldness, promptly retired to the rear. Don Alfonso de Ojeda, however, was a brave impulsive man, and without a moment's hesitation threw himself upon Don Juan. The latter parried several thrusts. Doubtless, his first intention was merely to de-

fend himself, but to one accustomed to fencing, a thrust following a parry becomes a mechanical, and almost an involuntary, movement. In a few moments Doña Fausta's father gave a deep sigh and fell, mortally wounded. Finding a free passage, Don Juan darted like an arrow over the stairs, out to the door, and in the twinkling of an eye was in the street, safe from pursuit of the servants, who crowded around their dying master. At the report of the arquebus Doña Teresa, who had hurriedly appeared and had been a witness of this terrible tragedy, fell in a swoon beside her father. As yet, she knew but half of her affliction.

Don Garcia was finishing his last bottle of Montilla, when Don Juan, pale, bespattered with blood, haggard, with doublet torn, and neckband awry, rushed frantically into the room, and gasping for breath, fell into a chair, unable to speak. The other perceived instantly that something serious had taken place.

Waiting until Don Juan had, with an effort, recovered his breath, he asked for details; it took but a few words to put him in possession of the facts. Don Garcia did not easily lose his self-control, and heard, without a tremor, the broken recital of his friend. When he had finished, Don Garcia filled a glass and offering it to him:

"Drink it," said he, "you need it. This is bad business," he added, after drinking himself. "To kill a father is a serious matter. . . . There are, however, many precedents, beginning with the Cid. The worst of it is you have no five hundred cousins, clothed in white, to protect you from the constables of Salamanca, and from the relatives of the deceased. But we must concern ourselves, first of all, with something more urgent. . . ."

He strode several times around the room as if to collect his thoughts.

"To remain in Salamanca," he continued, "after such a scandal would be madness. Don Alfonso de Ojeda was no obscure squire, and besides, the servants must have recognised you. Supposing for a moment that you were not recognised, you have acquired such an enviable reputation at the University that any anonymous crime would certainly be credited to you. So take my word for it, you must go, and the sooner the better. You have already learned three times as much as is needful for a gentleman of good position. So, forsake Minerva and cultivate Mars. You will be more successful in that vocation, for you have a strong propensity for fighting. There is war in Flanders. Let us go there and kill heretics; that's the most convenient

way to purchase absolution for our sins in this world. Amen! I will end this like a sermon."

The suggestion of Flanders acted like a charm on Don Juan. To leave Spain, he thought, would mean to escape from himself. In the midst of the hardships and dangers of war, he would have no time for remorse!

"To Flanders, to Flanders!" he cried. "Let us go and get killed in Flanders!"

"It is a long way from Salamanca to Brussels," gravely replied Don Garcia, "and in your dangerous position you can not start too soon. If the *corregidor* should catch you, you may be certain that you would find it difficult to go on any campaign except on one of His Majesty's galleys."

After a little time spent in consultation with his friend, Don Juan promptly removed his student's costume. He put on an embroidered leather vest, such as the soldiers wore at that time, and a wide-brimmed slouch hat; nor did he forget to fill his belt with as many doubloons as Don Garcia could crowd into it. All these preparations consumed but a few minutes. He began his journey on foot, escaping from the city without recognition, and walking all night and the following morning, until the sun's heat compelled him to rest. In the first city at which

he stopped he purchased a horse, and joining a company of travellers, arrived at Saragossa without interference. There he lingered for a few days under the name of Don Juan Carrasco. Don Garcia, who left Salamanca the day following his friend's departure, joined him in Saragossa. They did not remain longer than necessary to perform hurried devotions at Notre Dame, but they took time enough to ogle the Aragonian beauties. Providing themselves with two trusty servants, they went on to Barcelona, where they embarked for Civita Vecchia. Weariness of body, sea-sickness, the novelty of the situation, and the buoyancy of spirits natural to Don Juan, all contributed to make him speedily forget the terrible experiences through which he had recently passed. For several months the pleasures which the two friends enjoyed in Italy, made them lose sight of the principal object of their journey; but beginning to run short of funds, they joined a number of fellow-countrymen, who like themselves were brave and out of cash, and set out for Germany.

On arrival in Brussels every one joined the company whose captain he liked best. The two comrades decided to make their first campaign under Captain Don Manuel Gomare, first because he was an Andalusian, and then, because

he was said to require of his soldiers only that they be courageous, and keep their arms in good order. He was also a lenient disciplinarian.

Attracted by their fine appearance, Gomare treated them well and just as they would have wished; that is, he sent them out whenever a dangerous enterprise arose. Fortune smiled on them, and on the field where many of their comrades met death, they were not even wounded. Not only that, but they attracted the attention of their superior officers. Each obtained his ensign the same day. From this time, sure of the esteem and friendship of their commanders, they acknowledged their real names and resumed their former course of life, that is to say, they spent their days at the gaming-table or in drinking, and the nights were devoted to serenading the prettiest girls of the town where they happened to be in winter quarters. They had received their parents' forgiveness, a matter of trifling consequence, and letters of credit on the Antwerp banks. Of these they made good use. Young, rich, brave, and daring, their conquests were numerous and rapid. I shall not stop to recount them; let it suffice the reader to know that they considered it lawful to use any means whatever to win the favour of a pretty woman. Promises and protestations were only part of

the game in the opinion of these base sensualists, and if brothers or husbands remonstrated, for answer they had their good swords and hearts that were pitiless.

The war was resumed in the spring.

In a skirmish which resulted disastrously for the Spanish, Captain Gomare was fatally wounded. Don Juan, seeing him fall, hastened to him and called several soldiers to carry him from the field; but the brave captain, summoning his remnant of strength, said:

"Let me die here; for I feel that this is the end. As well die on this spot as a half-mile farther on. Look to your soldiers; they will have all they can do, for I see the Dutch advancing in force. My sons," he added, addressing the soldiers crowding around him, "gather around your standards and do not be uneasy on my account."

At this instant, Don Garcia reached his side and asked if he had not some last request which might be fulfilled after his death.

"What the devil do you suppose I should want at such a time?"

He seemed to reflect for a few moments.

"I have never thought much about death," he went on, "and I had no idea it was so near. . . . I should not be sorry to see a priest.

. . . But all the monks are with the baggage-trains. . . . Yet, it is hard to die unshriven."

"Here is my prayer-book," said Don Garcia, offering him a flask of wine. "Take courage!"

The eyes of the old soldier grew dimmer and dimmer. He did not hear Don Garcia's jest, but the veterans standing over him were shocked.

"Don Juan," said the dying man, "come close to me, my boy. See here. I am going to make you my heir. Take this purse, it contains everything I possess; it had better be yours than in the hand of one of those heretics. My only request is that you will have some masses said for the repose of my soul."

Don Juan, pressing the hand of the dying man, gave him his promise. At the same time Don Garcia in a low voice observed that there was a great difference between the opinions of a man at death's door and those he professes when seated at a table laden with wine-bottles. Several balls whizzed by their ears. With a hurried farewell to Captain Gomare the soldiers abandoned him to take their places in the ranks, and thenceforth their only thought was to make an orderly retreat. This was accomplished under great disadvantages, with an enemy of superior force at their heels, the road furrowed

by the rains, and with soldiers exhausted from a long and tedious march. The Dutch, however, were unable to overtake them and at night abandoned the pursuit without capturing a flag, or taking a single prisoner who had not dropped, wounded, out of the ranks.

When the two friends, with a number of officers, were resting that night in a tent they discussed the engagement in which they had just taken part. The orders of the commanding officer were criticised by some; others thought the result had shown him to be in the right. Then they came to speak of the dead and the wounded. "I shall grieve for Captain Gomare for many a day," said Don Juan. "He was a brave officer, a good companion, and a veritable father to his men."

"Yes," said Don Garcia, "but I confess that I was never so surprised as when I saw him in such distress because there was no black gown beside him. That's a proof of one thing, and that is, it is a great deal easier to be brave in words than in deeds. Such a man as that scoffs at danger afar off, but grows pale when it comes near. By the way, Don Juan, since you are his heir, suppose you tell us how much there is in the purse he left you?"

Don Juan then opened the purse for the first

time and found that it contained about sixty pieces of gold.

"Since we are in funds," continued Don Garcia, accustomed to regard his friend's purse as his own, "why should we not have a game of faro instead of sitting here whining about our dead friends?"

The proposition met with general approval. Several drums were brought and covered with a cloak. These served as a gaming-table. Don Juan played first, by the advice of Don Garcia; but before dealing the cards he took from his purse ten gold pieces, which he wrapped in his handkerchief, and put in his pocket.

"What the deuce are you doing?" cried Don Garcia. "The idea of a soldier hoarding up money, and on the eve of a battle, too!"

"You know very well, Don Garcia, that all this money does not belong to me. Don Manuel left me a legacy, *sub pœnæ nomine,* as we used to say in Salamanca."

"The devil take the prig," cried Don Garcia. "Damn me, I believe he means to give those ten crowns to the first priest we meet."

"And why not? I have promised."

"Shut up; by the beard of Mahomet, I am ashamed of you; I no longer know you."

The game opened. At first the chances were

equal, but before long they turned decidedly against Don Juan. In vain Don Garcia took the cards to turn the run of luck. After playing an hour all their own money and Captain Gomare's fifty crowns besides had passed into the banker's hands. Don Juan wanted to stop, and go to sleep, but Don Garcia was in a rage; he intended to play another game, and win back all he had lost.

"Come, Señor Prudence," said he, "let us see the colour of that money that you have hidden away so securely. I know it will bring us luck."

"But think, Don Garcia, I promised!"

"Come, come, child that you are! This is no time to think of masses. If the Captain himself were here, he would sooner loot a church than let a card pass without winning a stake."

"Here are five crowns," said Don Juan. "Do not stake them all at once."

"No flinching!" exclaimed Don Garcia, and he placed the five crowns on a king. He won, and took the stakes, but the next time he lost.

"Let me have the last five!" he cried, pale with anger. Don Juan made a few weak remonstrances, which were easily overcome; he yielded, and gave up four crowns, which immediately followed the others. Rising from the table

in a rage, Don Garcia flung the cards in the banker's face.

He turned to Don Juan: "You are always lucky," he said, "and I have been told that the last crown has power to conjure fate."

Don Juan was, to say the least, quite as furious as himself. No longer had he any scruples about masses, or his promise. He put the last remaining crown on an ace, and it promptly went the way of all the others.

"To the devil with Captain Gomare's soul!" he cried. "I believe his money was bewitched!"

The banker inquired whether they wished to continue the game; but they had lost all their money, and besides, it is not easy to find credit when one is in constant danger of losing his head. So they were obliged to leave the game and to seek consolation among the topers. The soul of the poor Captain was quite forgotten.

Several days later the Spanish, having received reinforcements, resumed the offensive and retraced their line of march, passing over the battle-fields where they had fought. The dead were still unburied. Don Garcia and Don Juan spurred forward their horses to escape the presence of these dead bodies, which shocked alike the eye and the nostrils. Suddenly a soldier who preceded them uttered a loud exclamation at the

sight of a corpse lying in a ditch. They drew near and saw that it was Captain Gomare. He was, however, almost unrecognisable. His features, distorted and stiffened in the agony of convulsions, gave evidence that his last moments were accompanied by terrible suffering. Although familiar with such spectacles, Don Juan could not repress a shudder. Those dim and bloodshot eyes seemed turned upon him in mute reproach. He recalled the dying request of the poor Captain, and how he had neglected to fulfil it. However, the artificial hardness of heart that he had succeeded in acquiring soon delivered him from these feelings of remorse; he immediately ordered a grave to be prepared for the burial of the Captain. By chance a Capuchin monk happened to be near and recited hastily a few prayers. The body was then sprinkled with holy water and covered with rocks and earth. The soldiers continued their march more silent than usual; but Don Juan observed an aged arquebusier searching his pockets for a long time before he finally dug out a coin, which he gave to the Capuchin, saying:

"This is to pay for some masses for Captain Gomare."

On the same day Don Juan gave signal proof of remarkable bravery, exposing himself with so

little consideration to the enemy's fire that one would have supposed that he sought death.

"We are very brave when our money's all gone," was the comment of his comrades.

Not long after the death of Captain Gomare, a young recruit was admitted into the regiment in which Don Juan and Don Garcia served. He seemed to be resolute and fearless, but of a cunning and mysterious disposition. He was never known to join his fellow-soldiers either in drinking or playing cards; he spent hours at a time on a bench in the guard-room engaged in watching the flight of the flies or even in playing with the trigger of his arquebus. The soldiers, who bantered him on account of his reserve, had nicknamed him Modesto. It was by this name that he was known in the regiment, even the officers calling him by no other.

The campaign ended with the siege of Bergop-Zoom, which was, as every one knows, one of the most bloody of the war, the besieged defending themselves with the utmost desperation. One night the two friends were together on duty in the trenches, which, by this time, were so near the walls of the town that the position was one of great danger. The besieged made frequent sorties, and their firing was brisk and well aimed.

The early part of the night passed in un-

abated vigilance; then besieged and besiegers seemed to yield to fatigue. Firing ceased on both sides, and over all the field profound silence reigned; or, if broken at all, it was an occasional shot, fired only to prove that while fighting had ceased, strict watch was being kept. It was about four o'clock in the morning, just the time when a man who has been on duty all night feels thoroughly chilled, and at the same time is overcome by a sensation of mental dejection, occasioned by physical weariness and the need of sleep. There is no soldier who will deny, if he be honest, that in such bodily and mental condition he hasn't been guilty of weakness which has made him blush after sunrise.

"Zounds!" exclaimed Don Garcia, as he stamped his feet to put some warmth into them, and folded his cloak tightly over his body; "I feel as if the very marrow in my bones were frozen. I believe a Dutch child could knock me down with a beer-jug. I tell you I am no longer myself. Awhile ago I trembled at the sound of an arquebus. If I were piously inclined I should be compelled to accept these unusual feelings as a warning from above."

All present, and Don Juan especially, were amazed to hear him speak of heaven, for it was a subject to which he gave scant heed; or if he

ever mentioned it, it was in derision. Seeing that several of the men smiled at his words, he was stirred by a sentiment of vanity, and exclaimed:

"Let no one, at any rate, take it into his head to suppose that I am afraid either of the Dutch, of God, or the devil, for, if he does so, we will settle our accounts at the next watch!"

"Never mind the Dutch, but as for God, and the other, we may be permitted to fear them," said an old gray-bearded captain, who wore a chaplet suspended beside his sword.

"What harm can they do me?" demanded the other. "Lightning does not carry as straight as a Protestant bullet."

"And what about your soul?" asked the old captain, crossing himself at this infamous blasphemy.

"Oh! my soul—I must be sure, in the first place, that I have one. Who has ever told me that I had a soul? The priests. Now, the invention of the soul yields them such rich revenues that it is not to be doubted that they are its authors, just as the pastry-cooks have invented tarts so as to sell them."

"Don Garcia, you will come to a bad end," said the old captain. "Such idle talk is out of place in the trenches."

"In the trenches, as elsewhere, I say what I

think. But I will be silent, for here is my friend, Don Juan, with his hat about to fall off, from his hair standing on end. He believes not only in the soul; he believes also in souls in purgatory."

"I am not a very clever fellow," replied Don Juan, laughing, "and sometimes I envy your sublime indifference to the things of the other world, for I confess, even if you sneer at me, there are moments when the things that are told of the damned give me disquieting thoughts."

"The best proof of the impotency of the devil is that you are now standing in this trench. Upon my word, gentlemen," added Don Garcia, slapping Don Juan on the shoulder, "if there were a devil he would have carried off this fellow long ago. Young as he is, I tell you, he ought to be excommunicated. He has sent more women to the bad and more men to their graves than two Franciscan friars and two ruffians of Valencia together could have done."

He was still speaking when a shot burst from the direction of the Spanish camp. Don Garcia placed his hand on his breast, and cried:

"I am wounded!"

He staggered and fell almost instantly. At the same time a man was seen running away, but in the darkness he was soon lost from his pursuers. Don Garcia's wound proved to be

mortal. The shot had been fired at close range, and the weapon had been charged with several balls. But the stoicism of the hardened sinner did not for an instant desert him. He dismissed peremptorily those who suggested that he should see a priest. To Don Juan he said:

" One thing only torments me, and that is the Capuchins will persuade you that my death is a judgment from God. You must admit that nothing is more natural than that an arquebus-shot should kill a soldier. Suppose they do say that the shot was fired from our side. Doubtless some spiteful, jealous person has had me assassinated. If you catch him, hang him high and with despatch. Listen, Don Juan, I have two mistresses in Antwerp, three in Brussels, and others elsewhere that I can not recall—my memory begins to fail—I bequeath them to you, —for lack of anything better. Take my sword, too—and be sure not to forget the thrust I taught you. Good-bye. Instead of having masses said after my burial, see that my comrades join in a glorious orgy."

These were almost his last words. To God, to eternity, he gave no more thought than when he was throbbing with life and vigour. He died with a smile upon his lips, vanity helping him to sustain to the end the shocking rôle he had

played so long. Modesto was seen no more in camp. The entire regiment felt sure that he was Don Garcia's assassin, but they were lost in vain conjectures as to the motive which had led him to the murder.

Don Juan grieved for Don Garcia more than if he had been his brother. He said to himself—foolish fellow—he owed to Don Garcia all that he was. He it was who had initiated him into the mysteries of life, who had torn from his eyes the dense scales which had blinded them. "What was I before I met him?" he asked himself, his self-conceit answering that he was now a being far superior to other men. In fact, all the evil which that atheist had really taught him he accounted as good, and for this he was as grateful to his teacher as a virtuous pupil should be who merits his master's approval.

The melancholy impressions left with him by this sudden death were sufficiently lasting to cause him for several months to change his mode of life. But he returned gradually to his former habits, which had now too firm a hold on him to be uprooted by an incident. He began once more to gamble, to drink, to make love to women, and to fight their husbands. Each day brought new adventures. To-day, climbing a breach; to-morrow, scaling a balcony; in the

morning, a duel with a jealous husband; at night, drinking with harlots.

While steeped in such excesses he learned of his father's death; his mother survived her husband only a few days, so that he received the same day news of the death of both parents. Following the advice of his lawyers and the promptings of his own inclination, he determined to return to Spain, to enter upon the possession of the vast estate and enormous wealth which he had inherited. He had already obtained pardon for the death of Don Alfonso de Ojeda, Doña Fausta's father, and he regarded that incident as entirely closed. He desired, moreover, a wider field of action for the exercise of his talents. He thought of the attractions of Seville, and of all the beautiful women there, who doubtless waited for his arrival only, to surrender to his fascinations.

Removing his armour then, he departed for Spain. Stopping a few days at Madrid, he attracted notice in a bull-fight by the richness of his apparel, and by his skill in goading the animal. While there he made a number of conquests, but he could not linger long. On his return to Seville, all, both great and small, were dazzled by his magnificence.

Every day he contrived some novel entertain-

ment, to which were invited the most beautiful women of Andalusia; every day his superb palace was the scene of new forms of pleasure, of new and unrestrained revelries. He became king among a group of profligates, who, while unruly and turbulent toward one another, obeyed him with the docility which is often seen among people of dissolute life. In a word there was no form of debauchery into which he had not fallen; and as a rich libertine has unlimited influence, so his pernicious example was followed by all the Andalusian youth, who lauded him to the skies, and took him as their model. If Providence had allowed his evil career to continue much longer, it would have required a rain of fire to wipe out the licentiousness and crimes of Seville. A serious illness attacked Don Juan. The days that he lay in bed were not the occasion for meditation or retrospection, but on the contrary he begged his physician to restore him to health only that he might rush into new excesses.

During his convalescence he amused himself by compiling a list of all the women he had seduced and all the husbands he had deceived. The list was systematically arranged in two columns. In one column were the names of the women, with a summary of their characteristics; in the opposite line the names and professions of their husbands.

He had great difficulty in recalling the names of all these unfortunates, and we may well believe that the catalogue was far from complete.

He showed the list one day to a friend who had called to see him. While in Italy he had received the favour of a woman who boasted of having been the mistress of a Pope, so that it was eminently proper that the list should begin with her name, that of the Pope figuring in the column of husbands. Then came a reigning prince, then several dukes, barons, and so on down to the artisans.

"Look at it," said he to his friend, "look at it; not one has escaped me, from the Pope to the cobbler; there is no profession that has not made its contribution."

Don Torribio—that was his friend's name—looked over the list and returned it, saying with a chuckle: "It is incomplete!"

"What! Incomplete? Who is then missing from my list of husbands?"

"*God,*" replied Don Torribio.

"*God?* That is a fact; there is no nun here. By Jove, I thank you for mentioning it. Very well! I swear on my word as a gentleman that before the end of the month He shall be on my list, preceding his reverence the Pope, and that I shall invite you to supper here with a nun. In

which of the convents of Seville are there any good-looking nuns?"

A few days later Don Juan had entered on his campaign. He began to frequent the churches to which convents were attached. He knelt very near the railings that separate the spouses of the Lord from the rest of the faithful. From this point he stared boldly at those timid virgins, just as a wolf which has made his way into a sheepfold searches out the plumpest lamb to devour first. It was not long before he had marked in the Church of Our Lady del Rosario a young nun of ravishing beauty, which was enhanced by an expression of sadness overshadowing her countenance. She was never seen to raise her eyes or to look to the right or the left; she seemed to be utterly lost in the celebration of the Divine Mystery upon the altar. Her lips moved softly, and it was evident that her prayers were more fervent than were the prayers of her companions. The sight of this nun stirred old memories. It seemed to Don Juan that he had seen this woman elsewhere, but it was impossible for him to recall the circumstances. Where so many pictures stood out more or less distinctly in his memory, it was inevitable that some should be merely confused outlines. For two successive days he returned to the church, always taking a position near the

railing, but never once could he induce Sister Agatha to raise her eyes. He had learned that this was her name.

The hindrances in the way of triumphing over one so well protected both by her position and her modesty served but to whet Don Juan's evil passions. The most important, and also the most difficult, point was to influence her to notice him. His vanity persuaded him that if he could but attract Sister Agatha's attention the victory was more than half won. He planned the following expedient, therefore, to compel that lovely young person to raise her eyes. Taking his position as near her as possible, and profiting by the moment of the elevation of the Host, when the entire congregation knelt with bowed heads, he thrust his hand between the bars of the railing and poured at Sister Agatha's feet the contents of a vial of attar of roses. The penetrating odour which suddenly arose caused the young nun to look up; and as Don Juan was kneeling directly in front of her, she could not fail to see him. Intense astonishment was expressed on her countenance; then, giving a faint cry, she fell in a swoon upon the floor. Her companions pressed around her and she was carried away to her cell. Don Juan left the church well satisfied with himself, saying as he went:

"That nun is simply charming, but the oftener I see her the more I think that she must already belong in my catalogue!"

The next day, when mass began, he was to be found at his post near the railing. Sister Agatha, however, was not in her accustomed place in the front row; she was almost concealed from view behind her companions. Don Juan observed, however, that several times she looked up stealthily. He drew from this an omen favourable to himself. "The little one fears me," he thought. "I shall soon have her tamed."

At the conclusion of the mass, he noticed that she entered the confessional; but on the way she passed by the railing and, as if by accident, dropped her beads. Don Juan had too much experience to be taken in by this supposed inadvertence. His first thought was that he must, at all hazards, obtain the beads, but they were on the other side of the grill, and he knew that he must wait until every one had left the church. While waiting for that moment he leaned against a pillar in an attitude of meditation with one hand over his eyes, but the fingers were slightly apart, so that he could follow all the movements of Sister Agatha. Whoever had seen him in that attitude would have taken him

for a devout Christian absorbed in pious reverie.

The nun left the confessional and started toward the door that led into the convent; but she soon perceived or pretended to perceive that her beads were missing. After searching for them on all sides she spied them beside the railing. As she leaned down to pick them up Don Juan observed something white slip under the bars. It was a tiny folded paper. The nun withdrew immediately.

Surprised that his stratagem had succeeded sooner than he had expected, the libertine experienced a feeling of regret that he had not encountered more obstacles. Such is similar to the disappointment of the hunter when he pursues a stag, expecting a long, hard chase; suddenly, before he has gotten a fair start, the animal falls, and the hunter is deprived of the pleasure and the credit which he had promised himself. Don Juan, nevertheless, picked up the note without delay and left the church that he might read it without interruption. It ran as follows:

"Is it really you, Don Juan? And you have not forgotten me after all? I have been very unhappy, but I was beginning to become reconciled to my fate. Now, I shall be a hundred times

more unhappy than I was before. I ought to hate you—you have shed my father's blood—but I can neither hate you nor forget you. Take pity on me and do not come again to this church; you make it too hard for me. Good-bye, good-bye, I am dead to the world.

TERESA."

"Ah! And so it is little Teresa!" said Don Juan. "I was sure I had seen her somewhere."

Then he read the letter again. "'I ought to hate you.' That is to say, I adore you. 'You have shed my father's blood.' Chimène said the same thing to Rodrigue. 'Do not come again to this church,' which means, I shall look for you to-morrow. Very good! She is mine!"

Thereupon he went to dinner.

The next day found him punctual at church with a letter in his pocket ready to deliver, but to his great surprise, Sister Agatha did not appear. Never before had mass seemed so long. He was furious. After cursing Teresa's scruples a hundred times he went for a stroll on the banks of the Guadalquivir to think of some plan by which he might send her a letter. He determined on this scheme.

The Convent of Our Lady del Rosario was famous in Seville for the delicious confections made by the sisters. Don Juan went to the con-

vent parlour, asked for the attendant and requested to see the list of confections which she had for sale.

"Have you no Maraña citrons?" he asked as naturally as possible.

"Maraña citrons, señor? This is the first time I have ever heard of them."

"They are in great demand, however, and I am surprised that a house with a reputation like yours does not make quantities of them."

"Maraña citrons?"

"Maraña," repeated Don Juan, emphasising each syllable. "I can not believe that among your nuns some one does not know the recipe. I beg you to ask if they do not know these preserves. I will come back to-morrow."

A few minutes later the whole convent was talking about Maraña citrons. Their most skilful confection-makers had never heard of them. Sister Agatha alone knew how to make them. "You must add to the citrons extract of roses, extract of violets, and so on, and then—" She was ordered to make the preserves herself. When he returned next day, Don Juan found ready for him a jar of Maraña citrons; in fact, it was an execrable mixture; but hidden underneath the lid of the jar, he found a note from Teresa. Again, she besought him to renounce

and forget her. To be just, the poor girl tried to deceive herself. Religion, filial duty, and love were all contending for her heart; but it was easy to see that love held the first place. The next day, Don Juan sent a page to the convent with a case of citrons which he wished to have preserved, and which he intrusted specially to the nun who had made the confections purchased the day before. Cleverly concealed in the bottom of the case was an answer to Teresa's letter. He wrote:

"I have been miserably unhappy. It was some fatality that guided my arm. Since that fatal night you have never been absent from my thoughts. I dared not hope that you would not hate me. And now, I have found you again. Speak to me no more of the vows you have made. Before you ever took those vows you belonged to me. You have no right to dispose of the heart that you gave me . . . I have come to reclaim the one whom I love better than life . . . I must have you again, or I shall die. To-morrow I shall ask to see you in the parlour. I have not attempted to call to see you before, fearing that your agitation might betray us. Summon all your courage. Tell me if the attendant can be bribed."

Two drops of water, placed skilfully on the

paper, were supposed to be tears, wrung from him as he wrote.

A few hours later the gardener at the convent brought him a reply, and offered his services. The attendant was not to be bribed. Sister Agatha consented to come down to the parlour, but only on condition that it would be to say and to receive an eternal farewell.

The unhappy Teresa appeared in the parlour more dead than alive and was obliged to support herself at the grille by both hands, to keep from falling. Calm and impassive himself, Teresa's exquisite suffering, of which he was the author, was a savoury morsel to Don Juan.

In order to mislead the attendant, he spoke casually of friends whom Teresa had known in Salamanca and who had charged him with messages and greetings. Then, taking advantage of a moment when the attendant moved to the other side of the room, he whispered quickly to the nun:

" I am resolved, at any risk, to take you away from this place. If necessary, I shall burn down the convent. I shall listen to no refusal. You belong to me. In a few days you will be mine. I may perish in the attempt, but others will perish along with me."

The attendant returned. Doña Teresa was

strangling, and unable to utter a word. Don Juan, however, was talking unconcernedly of preserves, of needlework—things that occupied the sisters' time; he promised to send the attendant several rosaries which had been blessed by the Pope, and to present the convent with a brocade robe to adorn its patron saint on her fête-day. After a half-hour of talk like this, he departed, his formal and dignified adieu leaving Teresa in a condition of agitation and despair impossible to describe. She flew to her cell, where she shut herself in, and her pen, more obedient than her tongue, wrote him a long letter, in which she poured out her soul in reproach, entreaty, and lamentation. She could not withhold the confession of her love, but this sin she excused, thinking that it was expiated in her refusal to yield to the prayers of her lover. The gardener, who took charge of this criminal correspondence, soon brought a reply. Don Juan still threatened to resort to extreme measures. He had at his command a hundred trusty followers. The sacrilege of his act did not terrify him. He would count it happiness to die if he could but hold his dear love once more in his embrace. What could she do, a helpless child, who had always yielded to the man she adored? She passed the nights in tears, and in the day

she could not pray, for Don Juan's image was constantly before her. Even when she joined the nuns in their exercises of worship, it was but a mechanical act, for her thoughts were wholly engrossed in her fatal passion.

After a little while she no longer had the strength to resist, and intimated to Don Juan that she would agree to anything. She argued to herself, that, since she was already lost, her fate could be no worse for having tasted a brief moment of happiness. Don Juan, overjoyed, made his preparations to take her from the convent. He selected a night when there was no moon. The gardener provided Teresa with a rope-ladder for use in climbing the convent walls. A bundle of conventional garments was to be concealed in the garden, for it would never do to be seen in the street in a nun's habit. Don Juan would be waiting for her on the outer side of the convent wall. Not far away, a litter, harnessed to a pair of strong mules, would be in readiness to drive them quickly to a house in the country. There, safe from all pursuit, her life would be peaceful and happy under the protection of her lover. Such was the plan that Don Juan had outlined. He had appropriate clothing made for Teresa; he tested the ladder, and sent her instructions how to attach it; indeed, he

overlooked nothing that would insure the success of his enterprise. The gardener could be depended on, for he had too much to gain to be suspected of disloyalty. Not only so, but it was arranged that he was to be assassinated the night after the abduction. In short, it seemed impossible for anything to defeat a plot so skilfully laid.

In order to avert suspicion, Don Juan left for the Château de Maraña two days before that planned for the elopement. Although he had spent the greater part of his childhood and youth in this castle, he had never entered it since his return to Seville. He arrived just at nightfall and at once ordered a bountiful supper, after which he retired for the night. In his room two tall wax candles were burning and upon the table lay a book of licentious tales. After reading several pages, and becoming drowsy, he extinguished one of the candles. Before putting out the second one, he happened to glance inadvertently about the room, when suddenly, in the alcove, he spied the picture upon which he had so often gazed in his childhood: the picture representing the torments of purgatory. Instinctively his eyes rested on the man whose vitals a serpent was devouring, and, although this representation inspired in him far more terror than it

had formerly done, he could not turn away. At the same time, he recalled the face of Captain Gomare, with the frightful convulsions wrought upon it by death. The recollection made him shudder, and he felt his hair stand on end. Summoning all his courage, however, he blew out the candle, hoping that the darkness would obliterate the hideous images which persisted in tormenting him. Although veiled from his sight by the night, his eyes still sought the picture, and so well did he know every detail that it stood out in his memory as clearly as if it were broad day. In his imagination, the figures sometimes shone so brightly in the fire of purgatory, which the artist had painted, that the fire itself appeared real. At last, in his excitement he summoned his servants, intending to order them to remove the picture that had occasioned such frightful fancies. When they appeared, however, he was ashamed of his weakness, for he knew he would be an object of ridicule were it known to his menials that he was panic-stricken by a picture, and so he merely told them that he wished the candles lighted again, and to be left alone. He began again to read; but while his eyes rested on the pages of the book, his thoughts were with the picture on the wall. In this way he passed a sleepless

night, a prey to indescribable restlessness. At break of dawn he left the room for a morning's hunt. The exercise and the bracing air of early morning had a pacifying effect upon his mood, so that by the time he returned to the castle the sensations aroused by the picture had altogether vanished. At supper that night he drank deeply of wine, and his mind was slightly confused when he went to bed. At his command a different room had been prepared for him, but we may be sure that he had not ordered the picture to be removed thither. The remembrance of it remained with him, however, and was strong enough to keep him awake the greater part of the night.

Yet these terrors caused him no regret for his impious life. His mind rather was entirely absorbed in the abduction about to be accomplished; and after leaving all the necessary directions to his servants, he set out alone at mid-day for Seville so that he would arrive there after dark. In fact, night had fully settled down when he passed the Tower del Lloro, where one of his menials was waiting. He gave the servant his horse to return and was informed that the litter and mules were in readiness. By his directions they were to be waiting in a street near enough the convent to reach conveniently with

Teresa, yet not too near to excite the suspicions of the watchman, if they should chance to meet him. Every preparation had been made; his instructions had been executed to the letter. He found he had still an hour to wait before giving Teresa the signal. His man threw over his shoulders a voluminous brown cloak, and he entered Seville alone, by the *porte de Triana*, concealing his face to avoid recognition. He was weary from the journey and the heat of the day, and sat down to rest upon a bench in a deserted street. He passed the time whistling and humming all the tunes that came into his mind. He consulted his watch from time to time, discovering to his vexation that the hands did not advance to the measure of his impatience. Suddenly his ear caught the strains of solemn and mournful music. He recognised at once the chants consecrated to the burial service. Soon a procession turned the corner and advanced toward the place where he was sitting. A double line of mourners, all carrying lighted tapers, preceded a bier, which was draped in black velvet, and borne by several persons dressed in antiquated fashion, with white beards and with swords hanging by their sides. The procession closed with two lines of mourners, in black robes, and like the others, all carrying lighted tapers.

They approached slowly and silently. No sound of footsteps was heard and it seemed as if the figures glided rather than walked on the pavement. The gowns and the cloaks fell in long, stiff folds, as motionless as the drapery of marble statues.

At this spectacle, Don Juan at once experienced that feeling of disgust which the thought of death always inspires in an epicurean. He rose, intending to leave the scene, but the immense number of mourners and the stateliness and pomp of the cortège excited his curiosity. The procession was directed toward a neighbouring church, whose doors had just opened ostentatiously, as if about to receive an important personage.

Don Juan, touching the sleeve of one of the mourners, politely inquired who was the person about to be buried. The mourner lifted his eyes; his face was pale and emaciated like that of a man just recovering from a long and painful illness. In a sepulchral voice he replied:

"It is Count Don Juan de Maraña."

At this strange response Don Juan's hair rose on his head; but the next instant he had recovered his composure and broke into a smile:

"Of course I misunderstood," said he, "or else the old man was merely mistaken."

He entered the church with the procession. The funeral dirges began, to the noble tones of the organ accompaniment, and priests in mourning vestments intoned the *De Profundis.* Despite his efforts to retain his composure, Don Juan felt that his very blood was curdling in his veins. Again approaching a mourner, he asked:

"Whose funeral is this?"

"It is Count Don Juan de Maraña's," replied the mourner in a hollow and terrifying tone.

Don Juan leaned against a pillar to keep from falling. He felt his strength failing him, and all his courage forsook him. The service continued, however; and the solemn peals of the organ and the chanting of the terrible *Dies Iræ* echoed through the vaults of the church. It seemed as if he were listening to the chorus of angels at the last judgment. Finally, with an effort, he seized the hand of a passing priest. The hand was cold as marble.

"Father, in the name of Heaven," he cried, "for whose soul are you now praying? And who are you?"

"We pray for Count Don Juan de Maraña," answered the priest, steadily regarding him and with an expression of grief upon his countenance. "We are praying for his soul, which is

in mortal sin. We are the souls who have been saved from purgatory by the prayers and masses of his mother. We are paying to the son the debt we owe the mother; but this is the last mass we shall be permitted to say for the soul of Count Don Juan de Maraña."

At this moment the church clock struck; it was the hour fixed for the abduction of Teresa.

"The hour has come!" exclaimed a voice from an obscure corner of the church. "The hour has come! Is he to belong to us?"

Turning his head, Don Juan saw a terrible apparition. Don Garcia, ghastly, and dripping with blood, moved up the aisle with Captain Gomare, whose features were still distorted from his horrible convulsions. Both went directly to the bier: Don Garcia, tearing off the lid of the coffin, and throwing it violently to the ground, repeated:

"Is he ours?"

Just then a huge serpent rose from behind Don Garcia, and seemed on the point of darting into the coffin. With a shriek: "Jesús!" Don Juan fell unconscious to the pavement.

The night was far advanced when the watchman in passing observed a man lying motionless at the church door. The constables came up, supposing it was the body of some one who had

been murdered. They recognised at once the Count de Maraña, and tried to revive him by dashing cold water in his face, but seeing that he did not regain consciousness, they carried him to his home. Some said he was drunk, others that he had received a cudgelling from some injured husband. Not a man, or at least not an honest man, in Seville liked him, and every one expressed his mind without hesitation. One blessed the club that had knocked him out so effectively; another wondered how many bottles of wine that unconscious carcass could hold. The constables handed Don Juan over to his servants, who ran at once in search of a surgeon. They bled him freely and he soon began to show signs of consciousness, at first uttering only meaningless words, inarticulate cries, sobs, and moans. Little by little, he seemed to observe attentively all the objects about him. He asked where he was; then, what had become of Captain Gomare, Don Garcia, and the funeral procession. His attendants thought him mad. After swallowing a cordial, he asked for a crucifix, which he kissed again and again, shedding a flood of tears. He then commanded that a confessor be brought.

There was general surprise, so widely known was his impiety. Several priests refused to come,

confident that this was only one of his malicious jokes. Finally, a Dominican monk consented to go to him. They were left alone, and Don Juan, throwing himself at the feet of the monk, told him of the vision he had seen. Then he confessed. As he went over the category of his crimes he broke off to ask if it were possible for so great a sinner as himself to obtain Divine forgiveness. The priest replied that the mercy of God was infinite. After exhorting him to persevere in his repentance, he gave him the consolation which the Church never refuses even the worst of criminals. The monk then left him with the promise to return that night. Don Juan spent the entire day in prayer. When the Dominican returned in the evening the penitent told him that he had fully resolved to retire from the world, upon which he had brought such dishonour, and to endeavour to expiate in penitential works the heinous crimes in which he was steeped. The monk, touched by his tears, gave him such comfort as he could, and, to see whether he would have the courage to carry out his determination, painted in terrifying language the austerities of the cloister. But at every penance that he described, Don Juan only cried that it was nothing, and that he deserved treatment far more severe.

The next day he gave half of his fortune to his relatives who were poor; another part he consecrated to the endowment of a hospital and a chapel. He distributed large sums among the poor, and to the priests, that many masses might be said for the souls in purgatory, especially for the souls of Captain Gomare and those unfortunate men whom he had killed in duel.

Finally, he invited all his friends, and in their presence called himself to account for the evil example he had been to them: with deep pathos he depicted the remorse that he now suffered for the sins of his past life, and the hopes that he dared to entertain for the future. Several of those libertines were affected by what he said, and repented; others, more callous, left him with heartless jests.

Before entering the monastery which he had chosen for retreat, Don Juan wrote to Doña Teresa. He confessed his dishonourable intentions; he told her the story of his past life, and his conversion; he begged her to forgive him, and promised to profit by her example, and in repentance to seek his soul's salvation. This letter he intrusted to the care of the Dominican, after reading him the contents.

Poor Teresa! She had waited for hours in the convent garden, watching for the signal;

hours of indescribable suspense. Then, seeing that dawn was about to break, she returned to her cell, a prey to the keenest anguish. Don Juan's failure to come she attributed to a thousand causes, all equally far from the truth. Several days passed thus, with no word, no message that might soften her despair. At last, the monk, after conferring with the Superior, obtained permission to see her and give her the letter of her repentant lover. As she read, her brow was covered with great beads of sweat, now her face became crimson, now pale as death. She had the courage, however, to read to the end. The Dominican then endeavoured to describe Don Juan's repentance, and rejoiced that she had escaped the terrible fate which, but for the evident intervention of Providence, was in store for them both. But to these words of counsel Teresa only moaned: "He never loved me!" The unhappy girl was attacked by a violent fever; every remedy known to science and religion was applied to conquer her malady, but in vain. Some of them she refused altogether; to others she seemed indifferent. And so, after a few days she died, still repeating: "He never loved me!"

While still wearing the habit of a novice Don Juan proved the sincerity of his conversion. No

fast, no penance, was imposed upon him, but he considered it too mild; and the abbot of the monastery was obliged often to restrain him in his self-imposed macerations. He pointed out to him that such a course would only shorten his life; and that in reality it required more courage to suffer during a long period the penances judiciously imposed by his superiors, than to hasten his end by self-inflicted punishments.

At the expiration of his novitiate, Don Juan, assuming the name of Brother Ambroise, took his final vows, and because of his piety and asceticism he edified the whole community. Under his fustian gown he wore a coarse hair-cloth shirt; a narrow box, shorter than his body, was his bed. He restricted his diet to stewed vegetables; only on fête-days, and then by the express order of the abbot, did he consent to eat bread. Outstretched upon a cross, he spent the greater part of the night in meditation and prayer.

In fact, he was the example for this community of religious men, as formerly he had been the model for all the libertines of his social sphere. An epidemic, which broke out in Seville, gave him an opportunity to put into practice those new virtues which were the fruit of his conversion. The victims of the plague were

received into the hospital which he had endowed; he nursed the poor, spending all his time by their bedside, in exhortation, consolation, and encouragement. So great was the danger of contagion that it was impossible to find, for love or money, men willing to bury the dead. Don Juan fulfilled this ministry also; entering the abandoned houses, he gave decent burial to the bodies which he found there, and many had been left for days unburied. Everywhere blessings were showered on him. Never once during the terrible scourge did he contract the disease, many credulous persons asserting that God had performed a new miracle in his favour.

Don Juan, or rather Brother Ambroise, had now dwelt in the cloister for a number of years, his life being one uninterrupted succession of pious practices and penances. The memory of his past life was still present in his thoughts, but his remorse was beginning to be less acute, owing to the consciousness of Divine forgiveness imparted by his changed life.

One day, after dinner, the hour when the sun shone with fiercest heat, all the brothers were enjoying a short rest, as was their custom. Brother Ambroise alone worked in the garden, bareheaded, under the burning sun; it was one of his self-imposed penances. Bending over his

spade he saw the shadow of a man, who paused beside him. Supposing it was one of the monks, who had walked out into the garden, he continued his task, saluting him with an *Ave Maria.* There was no response. Surprised that the shadow did not move, he looked up from his work, and saw standing before him a tall young man. He wore a cloak which reached to the ground, and a hat, shaded by a black and white plume, almost concealed his face. This man looked at him in silence, with an expression of malicious pleasure and scorn. They stood thus for several moments, gazing steadily at each other. Finally, the stranger, stepping forward, and removing his hat so as to disclose his features, said:

"Do you recognise me?"

Don Juan regarded him still more closely, but without recognition.

"Do you remember the siege of Berg-op-Zoom?" asked the stranger. "Have you forgotten a soldier named Modesto——?"

Don Juan trembled. The stranger continued coldly:

"A soldier named Modesto, who shot and killed your worthy friend, Don Garcia, instead of yourself, at whom he aimed? Modesto! I am he. I have still another name, Don Juan:

my name is Don Pedro de Ojeda. I am the son of Don Alfonso de Ojeda, whom you killed . . . I am the brother of Doña Fausta de Ojeda, whom you killed . . . I am the brother of Doña Teresa de Ojeda, whom you killed."

"My brother," said Don Juan, falling on his knees, "I am a miserable mass of crimes. It is to expiate them that I am wearing this garb, and that I have renounced the world. If there is any means by which I may win your forgiveness, tell me what it is. The severest penance will have no terrors for me if thereby you will cease to curse me."

Don Pedro smiled bitterly.

"Let us abandon hypocrisy, Señor Maraña. I do not forgive. As for my curses, you have brought them on yourself. But I am too impatient to wait for their realisation. I have with me something far more effective than curses."

Thereupon he threw aside his cloak and showed two long swords which he carried at his side. He drew them from the scabbards and stuck them both in the ground.

"Take your choice, Don Juan," he said. "I have been told that you are a great fighter and I pride myself on being no mean fencer. Let us see what you can do."

Don Juan made the sign of the cross, saying:

"Brother, you forget the vows that I have taken. I am no longer the Don Juan whom you once knew, I am Brother Ambroise."

"Very well! Brother Ambroise, you are my enemy, and no matter what name you call yourself, I hate you, and I intend to be avenged."

Don Juan again fell upon his knees.

"If you wish to take my life, brother, it is yours. Chastise me in any way you see fit."

"Cowardly hypocrite! Do you think to dupe me? If I had wanted to kill you like a mad dog, would I have taken the trouble to bring these weapons? Come, make your choice quickly, and defend your life."

"I tell you again, brother, I can not fight, but I can die."

"Miserable caitiff!" cried Don Pedro, in a rage. "I was told that you had courage, and I find you only a vile coward!"

"Courage, my brother? God grant me courage not to give way to utter hopelessness; for without His support the remembrance of my crimes would lead me to desperation. Good-bye, I will leave you, for I see that my presence maddens you. May the day come when you will believe in the sincerity of my repentance!"

He started to leave the garden, when Don Pedro grasped his arm.

"Either you or I," he cried, "shall never leave this spot alive. Take one of these swords, for I'll be damned if I believe a single word of your jeremiads!"

Don Juan looked at him beseechingly, and again tried to leave the place, but Don Pedro seized him roughly by the collar:

"You believe, then, infamous murderer that you are, that you can escape me! No! I shall tear into shreds your hypocritical robe that conceals the cloven foot, and then, it may be, you will find courage enough to fight with me."

With this, he pushed him violently against the wall.

"Señor Pedro de Ojeda," cried Don Juan, "kill me if you will, I shall not fight!"

And folding his arms, with eyes calm but determined, he looked steadily at Don Pedro.

"Yes, I shall kill you, miserable dastard! But first I shall treat you as the coward that you are!"

And he slapped him in the face, the first insulting blow that Don Juan had ever received. His face became livid. The pride and fury of his youth once more took possession of his soul. Without a word, he leaped toward one of the

swords, and seized it. Don Pedro took the other, and stood on guard. They attacked each other furiously, making a lunge simultaneously. Don Pedro's sword buried itself in Don Juan's gown and glanced along his body without inflicting a wound; Don Juan's sword, on the contrary, sank to the hilt into his adversary's breast. Don Pedro died instantly.

Seeing his enemy stretched at his feet, Don Juan stood for some time as if dazed, looking down upon him. Gradually he came to his senses, and to a realisation of the enormity of his crime. Throwing himself upon the body, he tried to restore it to life, but he was too familiar with the sight of wounds to doubt for a moment that this one was fatal. There at his feet lay the blood-stained sword, offering him a means of self-punishment; but quickly casting behind him this last temptation of the devil, terror-stricken, he rushed into the abbot's cell and threw himself at his feet. There, with tears streaming in floods down his cheeks, Don Juan told his terrible story. The abbot would not, at first, believe him, thinking that Don Juan's reason had become impaired on account of his severe penances, but his gown and hands, stained with blood, no longer permitted him to doubt the awful truth.

A man of rare presence of mind, he realised instantly that if this affair should come to be known, the scandal would reflect upon the monastery. No one had seen the duel, and he took care to conceal it from the brothers. He ordered Don Juan to follow him, and with his assistance, he carried the body into a cellar-room, and locking the door he took the key. Then, shutting Don Juan within his cell, the abbot went out to notify the *corregidor*.

One may, perhaps, be surprised that Don Pedro, who had already made one attempt to murder Don Juan, should have rejected the idea of a second assassination, preferring to overthrow his enemy in a duel; but this was only his diabolical plan of vengeance. He had heard of Don Juan's asceticism and his deep piety, and he had no doubt if he killed him in cold blood that he would send Don Juan's soul direct to heaven. He hoped, therefore, that by provoking him and compelling him to fight, he would kill him in the act of a mortal sin and would thus destroy both his body and his soul. We have seen how this wicked design turned against its author.

It was not difficult to hush up the affair. The magistrate acted in concert with the abbot to avert suspicion. The other monks believed that

the man had fallen in a duel with an unknown caballero, and when wounded, he had been carried into the monastery, where he had died almost immediately. As for Don Juan, I shall attempt to describe neither his remorse nor his repentance. Every kind of penance imposed by the abbot he suffered joyfully. During the remainder of his life, he kept, hanging at the foot of his bed, the sword with which he had killed Don Pedro, and never did he look at it without praying for his soul, and for the souls of his family. In order to subdue the last remnant of worldly pride lingering in his heart the abbot had commanded him to present himself every day before the convent cook, so that he might receive a slap. After receiving this humiliation Brother Ambroise never failed to turn the other cheek also, and to thank the cook for humbling him in this way. He lived ten years longer in the cloister and never once was his repentance interrupted by a return to the passions of his youth. He died, revered as a saint, even by those who had known him as an evil youth. On his death-bed, he begged as a favour, to be buried at the threshold of the church, so that all who entered should trample him underfoot. He wished also that his tomb should bear this inscription: *Here lies the worst man that ever lived.* It was

not thought fitting, however, to carry out all the requests dictated by his excessive humility. He was buried near the high altar of the church he had built. It is true that the inscription which he had composed was carved on the stone that covers his remains; but there was added to this the story of his conversion, and a eulogy to his virtues. His hospital, and especially the church where he is buried, are visited by every stranger who comes to Seville. Several of the masterpieces of Murillo adorn the chapel. *The Prodigal's Return,* and *The Pool of Bethesda* which are now admired in the art gallery of Señor Soult, formerly decorated the walls of the Hospital de la Caridad.

THE VENUS OF ILLE

La Venus D'Ille

THE VENUS OF ILLE

'Ιλεὼς ἥν δ'ἐγὼ, 'έστω ὁ ἀνδρίας
καὶ ἥπιος, ὑύτως ἀνδρεῖος ὤν.
ΛΟΥΚΙΑΝΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΨΕΥΔΗΣ.*

I DESCENDED the last hillside at Canigou, and, although the sun had already set, I could distinguish the houses of the little town of Ille, in the plain, toward which my steps were turned.

"You know," I said to the Catalanian who had been my guide since the previous day—"no doubt you know where M. de Peyrehorade lives?"

"Do I know it!" he exclaimed. "I know his house as well as I know my own; and if it wasn't so dark I would point it out to you. It is the prettiest in Ille. M. de Peyrehorade is a rich man; and he is marrying his son to a lady even richer than himself."

"Is the marriage to take place soon?" I asked.

"Very soon; probably the violinists are al-

* "If I am gracious, let the statue be also kind, seeing it is so nobly human."—*Lucian's "Philopseudes."*

ready ordered for the wedding. Perhaps it will be to-night, or to-morrow, or the day after, for all I know. It will be at Puygarrig; for the son is to marry Mademoiselle de Puygarrig. It will be a very grand affair!"

I had been introduced to M. de Peyrehorade by my friend M. de P., who told me he was a very learned antiquarian and of extreme good nature. It would give him pleasure to show me all the ruins for ten leagues round. So I was looking forward to visit with him the district surrounding Ille, which I knew to be rich in monuments belonging to ancient times and the Middle Ages. This marriage, of which I now heard for the first time, would upset all my plans. I said to myself, I should be a kill-joy; but I was expected, and as M. de P. had written to say I was coming, I should have to present myself.

"I will bet you, monsieur," said my guide to me, when we were in the plain—"I will bet you a cigar that I can guess why you are going to M. de Peyrehorade's."

"But that is not a difficult thing to guess," I replied, holding out a cigar to him. "At this hour, after traversing six leagues amongst the Canigou hills, the grand question is supper."

"Yes, but to-morrow? . . . Wait, I will bet that you have come to Ille to see the statue.

I guessed that when I saw you draw pictures of the Saints at Serrabona."

"The statue! What statue?" The word had excited my curiosity.

"What! did no one tell you at Perpignan that M. de Peyrehorade had found a statue in the earth?"

"Did you mean a statue in terra-cotta, or clay?"

"Nothing of the kind. It is actually in copper, and there is enough of it to make heaps of coins. It weighs as much as a church-bell. It is deep in the ground, at the foot of an olive tree that we dug up."

"You were present, then, at the find?"

"Yes, sir. M. de Peyrehorade told Jean Coll and me, a fortnight ago, to uproot an old olive tree which had been killed by the frost last year, for there was a very severe frost, you will remember. Well, then, whilst working at it with all his might, Jean Coll gave a blow with his pickaxe, and I heard bimm! . . . as though he had struck on a bell. 'What is that?' I said. He picked and picked again, and a black hand appeared, which looked like the hand of a dead man coming out of the ground. I felt frightened; I went to the master and said to him: 'There are dead folk, master, under the olive

tree; I wish you would send for the priest.' 'What dead folk?' he asked. He came, and had no sooner seen the hand than he cried out, 'An antique statue! an antique statue!' You might have thought he had discovered a treasure. And then he set to with pickaxe and hands, and worked hard; he did almost as much work as the two of us together."

"And what did you find in the end?"

"A huge black woman, more than half naked, saving your presence, sir, all in copper, and M. de Peyrehorade told us that it was an idol of pagan times . . . perhaps as old as Charlemagne!"

"I see what it is . . . some worthy Virgin in bronze which belonged to a convent that has been destroyed."

"The Blessed Virgin! Well, I never! . . . I should very soon have known if it had been the Blessed Virgin. I tell you it is an idol; you can see that plainly from its appearance. It stares at you with its great white eyes. . . . You might have said it was trying to put you out of countenance. It was enough to make one ashamed to look at her."

"White eyes were they? No doubt they are inlaid in the bronze; it might perhaps be a Roman statue."

"Roman! that's it. M. de Peyrehorade said that it was Roman. Ah! I can see you are as learned as he is."

"Is it whole and in good preservation?"

"Oh, it is all there, sir. It is much more beautiful and better finished than the painted plaster bust of Louis Philippe, which is at the town hall. But for all that the idol's face is not very nice to look at. She looks wicked . . . and she is so, too."

"Wicked! What mischief has she done you?"

"No mischief to me exactly; but I will tell you. We were down on all fours to raise her up on end, and M. de Peyrehorade was also tugging at the rope, although he had no more strength than a chicken, good man! With much trouble he got her straight. I picked up a tile to prop her up, when, good Lord! she fell upside down all in a heap. 'Look out there below!' I said, but I was not quick enough, for Jean Coll had not time to draw his leg out . . ."

"And was it hurt?"

"His poor leg was broken as clean as a pole. Goodness! when I saw it I was furious. I wanted to break up the idol with my pickaxe, but M. de Peyrehorade would not let me. He gave some money to Jean Coll, who, all the same,

has been in bed the whole fortnight since it happened, and the doctor says that he will never walk with that leg again so well as with the other. It is a sad pity; he was our best runner, and, after M. de Peyrehorade's son, he was the cleverest tennis player. M. Alphonse de Peyrehorade was dreadfully sorry, for it was Coll against whom he played. It was fine to see them send the balls flying. Whizz! whizz! they never touched the ground."

And so we chatted till we reached Ille, and I very soon found myself in the presence of M. de Peyrehorade. He was a little old man, still hale and active; he was powdered, had a red nose, and his manner was jovial and bantering. When he had opened M. de P.'s letter he installed me in front of a well-appointed table and presented me to his wife and son as an illustrious archæologist, whose desire it was to raise the province of Roussillon from obscurity, in which it had been left by the neglect of the learned.

Whilst I was eating with a good appetite—for nothing makes one so hungry as mountain air—I examined my hosts. I have said a word or two about M. de Peyrehorade; I should add that he was vivacity itself. He talked and ate, got up, ran to his library to bring me books, showed me engravings, and poured out drinks

for me; he was never still for two minutes. His wife was rather too stout, like most Catalanian women over forty, and she seemed to me a regular provincial, solely taken up with the cares of her household. Although the supper was ample for six people at least, she ran to the kitchen, had pigeons killed and dozens of them fried, besides opening I don't know how many pots of preserves. In a trice the table was loaded with dishes and bottles, and I should assuredly have died of indigestion if I had even tasted all that was offered me. However, at each dish that I refused there were fresh excuses. They were afraid I did not get what I liked at Ille—there are so few means of getting things in the provinces, and Parisians are so hard to please!

M. Alphonse de Peyrehorade stirred no more than a statue in the midst of his parents' comings and goings. He was a tall young man of twenty-six, with beautiful and regular features, but they were wanting in expression. His figure and athletic build quite justified the reputation he had gained in the country as an indefatigable tennis player. He was that evening exquisitely dressed, exactly like the latest fashion plate. But he seemed to me to be uneasy in his garments; he was as stiff as a post in his velvet collar, and could not turn round unless with his

whole body. His fat and sunburnt hands, with their short nails, contrasted strangely with his costume. They were the hands of a labouring man appearing below the sleeves of a dandy. For the rest, he only addressed me once throughout the whole evening, and that was to ask me where I had bought my watch-chain, although he studied me from head to foot very inquisitively in my capacity as a Parisian.

"Ah, now, my honoured guest," said M. de Peyrehorade to me when supper drew to its conclusion, "you belong to me. You are in my house, and I shall not give you any rest until you have seen all the curiosities among our mountains. You must learn to know our Roussillon and to do it justice. You have no idea what we can show you—Phœnician, Celtic, Roman, Arabesque and Byzantine monuments. You shall see them all—lock, stock and barrel. I will take you everywhere, and will not let you off a single stone."

A fit of coughing compelled him to stop. I took advantage of it to tell him I should be greatly distressed if I disturbed him during the interesting event about to take place in his family. If he would kindly give me the benefit of his valuable advice about the excursion I ought to take, I should be able to go without

putting him to the inconvenience of accompanying me. . . .

"Ah, you are referring to this boy's marriage!" he exclaimed, interrupting me. "That is all nonsense. It takes place the day after to-morrow. You shall celebrate the wedding with us; it will take place quietly, for the bride is in mourning for an aunt, whose heiress she is. Therefore there is to be neither fête nor ball. . . . It is a pity. . . . You would have seen our Catalanian women dance. . . . They are pretty, and you might perhaps have been tempted to follow Alphonse's example. One marriage, they say, leads to others. . . . On Saturday, after the young people are married, I shall be at liberty, and we will set out. I ask your forgiveness for the irksomeness of a provincial wedding. To a Parisian blasé with fêtes . . . and a wedding without a ball too! However, you will see a bride . . . such a bride . . . you must tell me what you think of her. . . . But you are not a frivolous man, and you take no notice of women. I have better things than women to show you. I am going to show you something! I have a fine surprise for you to-morrow."

"Ah," I replied, "it is not easy to have a treasure in your house without the public know-

ing all about it. I think I can guess the surprise you have in store for me. You are thinking of your statue. I am quite prepared to admire it, for my guide's description of it has roused my curiosity."

"Ah! he told you about the idol, for that is what they call my beautiful Venus Tur—but I will not talk of it. To-morrow, as soon as it is daylight, you shall see her, and you shall tell me if I am not right in considering her a *chef-d'œuvre*. Upon my word, you could not have arrived at a better time! There are inscriptions which, poor ignorant, I explain after my own fashion . . . but a savant from Paris! . . . You will probably laugh at my interpretation, for I have written a treatise on it. . . . I—an old provincial antiquarian—I am going to venture. . . . I mean to make the press groan. If you would be so good as to read and correct it, I should be hopeful. . . . For example, I am curious to know how you would translate this inscription on the pedestal: '*CAVE*' . . .—but I do not want to ask you anything yet! To-morrow, to-morrow! Not a single word about the Venus to-day."

"You are quite right, Peyrehorade," said his wife, "to stop talking about your idol; you ought to see that you are preventing the gentle-

man from eating. Why, he has seen far more beautiful statues in Paris than yours. There are dozens of them in the Tuileries, and in bronze too."

"Just look at her ignorance—the blessed ignorance of the provinces!" interrupted M. de Peyrehorade. "Fancy, comparing a splendid antique statue to the flat figures of Coustou!

> "'How irreverently of my affairs
> The gods are pleased to talk!'

"Do you know my wife wanted to have my statue melted down to make a bell for our church? She would have been its godmother—one of Myro's *chef-d'œuvres.*"

"*Chef-d'œuvre! chef-d'œuvre!* a fine *chef-d'œuvre* it is to break a man's leg!"

"Look here, wife," said M. de Peyrehorade in a determined voice, as he extended his right leg toward her, clad in a fine silk stocking, "if my Venus had broken this leg I should not have minded."

"Good gracious! Peyrehorade, how can you talk like that? Fortunately, the man is going on well. . . . And yet I can not bring myself to look at the statue which did such an evil thing as that. Poor Jean Coll!"

"Wounded by Venus, sir," said M. de Peyre-

horade, laughing loudly. "The rascal complains of being wounded by Venus!

"'Veneris nec præmia nôris.'

Who has not suffered from the wounds of Venus?"

M. Alphonse, who understood French better than Latin, winked with an understanding air, and looked at me as though to say, "Do you understand that, you Parisian?"

Supper ended at last. For an hour I had not been able to eat any more. I was tired, and could not hide my frequent yawns. Madame de Peyrehorade saw it first, and said that it was time to retire. Then began fresh apologies for the poor entertainment I should find. I should not be comfortable as in Paris; in the country things are so different! I must make allowances for the people of Roussillon. It was in vain I protested that after a journey among the mountains a bundle of straw would seem a delicious bed. They still begged me to pardon their poor rustic servants if they did not behave as well as they should. At last, accompanied by M. de Peyrehorade, I reached the room put apart for my use. The staircase, the top steps of which were of wood, led to the centre of a corridor, out of which opened several rooms.

"To the right," said my host, "is the set of rooms that I intend for the future Madame Alphonse. Your room is at the end of the passage opposite. You will understand," he added, with a look which he meant to be sly—"you will readily understand that newly married people wish to be by themselves. You are at one end of the house and they at the other."

We entered a very handsomely furnished room, where the first object that caught my eye was a bed seven feet long, six broad, and such a height that one needed a stool to get into it. My host pointed out the position of the bell, and satisfied himself that the sugar-bowl was full, and the smelling-bottles of eau de Cologne in their proper places on the toilette table; then he asked me repeatedly if I had all I wanted, wished me good-night and left me alone.

The windows were shut. Before undressing, I opened one to breathe the cool night air, which was delicious after such a lengthy supper. In front was Canigou Mountain, which is at all times beautiful, but to-night it seemed the fairest in the world, lighted up as it was by a splendid moon. I stood a few minutes to contemplate its marvellous outline, and was just going to close my window when, lowering my gaze, I saw the statue on a pedestal about forty yards from the

house. It was placed in a corner of the quick-set hedge which separated a little garden from a large, perfectly level court, which, I learnt later, was the tennis ground for the town. This ground had been M. de Peyrehorade's property, but he had given it to the public at his son's urgent entreaties.

From my distance away it was difficult to make out the form of the statue; I could only judge of its height, which I guessed was about six feet. At that moment two town larrikins passed along the tennis court, close to the hedge, whistling the pretty Roussillon air, "Montagnes régalades." They stopped to look at the statue, and one of them even apostrophised her in a loud voice. He spoke the Catalanian dialect, but I had been long enough in the province of Roussillon to be able to understand almost all he said.

"Chi-ike, hussy!" (the Catalanian expression was more forcible than that). "Look here," he said, "you broke Jean Coll's leg for him! If you belonged to me I would have broken your neck."

"Bah! what with?" asked the other. "She is made of copper, and so hard that Stephen broke his file over it, trying to cut into it. It is copper from before the Flood, and harder than anything I can think."

"If I had my cold chisel" (apparently he

was a locksmith's apprentice) "I would jolly soon scoop out her big white eyes; it would be like cracking a couple of nutshells for the kernels. I would do it for a *maravedi*."

They moved a few paces further off.

"I must just wish the idol good-night," said the tallest of the apprentices, stopping suddenly.

He stooped, and probably picked up a stone. I saw him stretch out his arm and throw something, and immediately after I heard a resounding blow from the bronze. At the same moment the apprentice raised his hand to his head and yelled out in pain.

"She has thrown it back at me!" he cried.

And then the two scamps took to flight as fast as they could. The stone had evidently rebounded from the metal, and had punished the rascal for the outrage done to the goddess.

I shut the window and laughed heartily.

Yet another vandal punished by Venus! Would that all destroyers of our ancient monuments could have their heads broken like that!

And with this charitable wish I fell asleep.

It was broad day when I awoke. Near my bed on one side stood M. de Peyrehorade in a dressing-gown; on the other a servant sent by his wife with a cup of chocolate in his hand.

"Come now, Parisian, get up! How lazy

you people from the capital are!" said my host, while I hastily dressed myself. "It is eight o'clock, and you still in bed. I got up at six o'clock. I have been up-stairs three times; I listened at your door on tiptoe, but there was no sign of life at all. It is bad for you to sleep too much at your age. And my Venus waiting to be seen! Come, take this cup of Barcelona chocolate as fast as you can . . . it is quite contraband. You can't get such chocolate in Paris. Take in all the nourishment you can, for when you are before my Venus no one will be able to tear you away."

I was ready in five minutes; that is to say, I was only half shaved, wrongly buttoned and scalded by the chocolate which I had swallowed boiling hot. I went down-stairs into the garden and was soon in front of a wonderfully fine statue. It was indeed a Venus of extraordinary beauty. The top part of her body was bare, just as the ancients usually depicted their great deities; her right hand, raised up to her breast, was bent, with the palm inward, the thumb and two first fingers extended, whilst the other two were slightly curved. The other hand was near the hips, and held up the drapery which covered the lower part of the body. The attitude of this statue reminded me of that of the Morra player,

which, for some reason or other, goes by the name of Germanicus. Perhaps they wished to depict the goddess playing at the game of Morra.

However that might be, it is impossible to conceive anything more perfect than the body of this Venus; nothing could be more harmonious or more voluptuous than its outlines, nothing more graceful or dignified than its drapery. I expected some work of the Lower Empire, and I beheld a masterpiece of the most perfect period of sculpture. I was specially struck with the exquisite truth of form, which gave the impression that it had been moulded by nature itself, if nature ever produces such perfect specimens.

The hair, which was raised off the forehead, looked as though it might have been gilded at some time. The head was small, like those of nearly all Greek statues, and bent slightly forward. As to the face, I should never be able to express its strange character; it was of quite a different type from that of any other antique statue I could recall to mind. It was not only the calm and austere beauty of the Greek sculptors, whose rule was to give a majestic immobility to every feature. Here, on the contrary, I noticed with astonishment that the artist had purposely expressed ill-nature to the point even of wickedness. Every feature was slightly con-

tracted: the eyes were rather slanting, the mouth turned up at the corners, and the nostrils somewhat inflated. Disdain, irony, cruelty, could be traced on a face which was, notwithstanding, of incredible beauty. Indeed, the longer one looked at this wonderful statue, the more did the distressing thought obtrude itself that such marvellous beauty could be united with an utter absence of goodness.

"If the model ever existed," I said to M. de Peyrehorade, "and I doubt if Heaven ever produced such a woman, how I pity her lovers! She would delight to make them die of despair. There is something ferocious in her expression, and yet I never saw anything so beautiful."

"'It is Venus herself gloating over her prey,'"

cried M. de Peyrehorade, pleased with my enthusiasm.

That expression of fiendish scorn was perhaps enhanced by the contrast shown by her eyes, which were encrusted with silver, and shone brilliantly with the greenish-black colour that time had given to the whole statue. Those brilliant eyes produced a kind of illusion which recalled lifelike reality. I remembered what my guide had said, that she made those who looked at her lower their eyes. It was quite true, and I could

hardly restrain an impulse of anger against myself for feeling rather ill at ease before that bronze face.

"Now that you have admired it minutely, my dear colleague in antiquarian research," said my host, "let us, by your leave, open a scientific conference. What say you to that inscription, which you have not yet noticed?"

He showed me the pedestal of the statue, and I read on it these words:

CAVE AMANTEM

"*Quid dicis, doctissime?*" he asked me, rubbing his hands together. "Let us see if we can hit on the meaning of this *CAVE AMANTEM.*"

"But," I answered, "it has two meanings. It can be translated: 'Beware of him who loves thee; mistrust thy lovers.' But in that sense I do not know whether *CAVE AMANTEM* would be good Latin. Looking at the lady's diabolic expression, I would rather believe that the artist intended to put the spectator on his guard against her terrible beauty; I would therefore translate it: 'Beware if *she* loves thee.'"

"Humph!" said M. de Peyrehorade; "yes, that is an admissible interpretation; but, without wishing to displease you, I prefer the first trans-

lation, and I will tell you why. You know who Venus's lover was?"

"There were several."

"Yes, but the chief one was Vulcan. Should one not rather say, 'In spite of all thy beauty and thy scornful manner, thou shalt have for thy lover a blacksmith, a hideous cripple'? What a profound moral, monsieur, for flirts!"

I could hardly help smiling at this far-fetched explanation.

"Latin is a difficult tongue, because of its concise expression," I remarked, to avoid contradicting my antiquarian friend outright; and I stepped further away to see the statue better.

"One moment, colleague," said M. de Peyrehorade, seizing me by the arm, "you have not seen everything. There is still another inscription. Climb up on the pedestal and look at the right arm." And saying this, he helped me up.

I held on to the neck of the Venus unceremoniously, and began to make myself better acquainted with her. I only looked at her for a moment, right in the face, and I found her still more wicked, and still more beautiful. Then I discovered that there were some written characters in an ancient, running hand, it seemed to me, engraved on the arm. With the help of spectacles I spelt out the following, whilst M. de

Peyrehorade repeated every word as soon as pronounced, with approving gesture and voice. It read thus:

VENERI TVRBVL . . .
EVTYCHES MYRO
IMPERIO FECIT.

After the word *TVRBVL* in the first line, I thought some letters had been effaced; but *TVRBVL* was perfectly legible.

"What do you say to that?" asked my host, radiantly smiling with malice, for he knew very well that I could not easily extricate myself from this *TVRBVL*.

"I can not explain that word yet," I said to him; "all the rest is easy. By his order Eutyches Myro made this great offering to Venus."

"Good. But what do you make of *TVRBVL?* What is *TVRBVL?*"

"*TVRBVL* puzzles me greatly; I can not think of any epithet applied to Venus which might assist me. Stay, what do you say to *TVRBVLENTA?* Venus, who troubles and disturbs. . . . You notice I am all the time thinking of her malignant expression. *TVRBVLENTA* would not be at all a bad epithet for Venus," I added modestly, for I was not myself quite satisfied with my explanation.

"Venus the turbulent! Venus the broiler! Ah! you think, then, that my Venus is a Venus of the pot-house? Nothing of the kind, monsieur. She is a Venus belonging to the great world. And now I will expound to you this *TVRBVL*. . . . You will at least promise not to divulge my discovery before my treatise is published. I shall become famous, you see, by this find. . . . You must leave us poor provincial devils a few ears to glean. You Parisian savants are rich enough."

From the top of the pedestal, where I still perched, I solemnly promised that I would never be so dishonourable as to steal his discovery.

"*TVRBVL* . . . monsieur," he said, coming nearer and lowering his voice for fear any one else but myself should hear, "read *TVRBVLNERÆ*."

"I do not understand any better."

"Listen carefully. A league from here, at the base of the mountain, is a village called Boulternère. It is a corruption of the Latin word *TVRBVLNERA*. Nothing is commoner than such an inversion. Boulternère, monsieur, was a Roman town. I have always been doubtful about this, for I have never had any proof of it. The proof lies here. This Venus was the

local goddess of the city of Boulternère; and this word Boulternère, which I have just shown to be of ancient origin, proves a still more curious thing, namely, that Boulternère, after being a Roman town, became a Phœnician one!"

He stopped a minute to take breath, and to enjoy my surprise. I had to repress a strong inclination to laugh.

"Indeed," he went on, "*TVRBVLNERA* is pure Phœnician. *TVR* pronounce *TOUR*. . . . *TOUR* and *SOUR*, are they not the same word? *SOUR* is the Phœnician name for Tyre. I need not remind you of its meaning. *BVL* is Baal, Bâl, Bel, Bul, slight differences in pronunciation. As to *NERA*, that gives me some trouble. I am tempted to think, for want of a Phœnician word, that it comes from the Greek νηρός—damp, marshy. That would make it a hybrid word. To justify νηρός I will show you at Boulternère how the mountain streams there form poisonous swamps. On the other hand, the ending *NERA* might have been added much later, in honour of Nera Pivesuvia, the wife of Tetricus, who may have done some benevolent act to the city of Turbul. But, on account of the marshes, I prefer the derivation from νηρός."

He took a pinch of snuff with a satisfied air.

"But let us leave the Phœnicians and return to the inscription. I translate, then: 'To the Venus of Boulternère Myro dedicates by his command this statue, the work of his hand.'"

I took good care not to criticise his etymology, but I wanted, on my own account, to put his penetrative faculties to the proof, so I said to him: "Wait a bit, monsieur, Myro dedicated something, but I do not in the least see that it was this statue."

"What!" he exclaimed, "was not Myro a famous Greek sculptor? The talent would descend to his family; and one of his descendants made this statue. Nothing can be clearer."

"But," I replied, "I see a little hole in the arm. I fancy it has been used to hold something, perhaps a bracelet, which this Myro gave to Venus as an expiatory offering, for Myro was an unlucky lover. Venus was incensed against him, and he appeased her by consecrating a golden bracelet. You must remember that *fecit* is often used for *consecravit*. The terms are synonymous. I could show you more than one instance if I had access to Gruter or, better still, Orellius. It is natural that a lover should behold Venus in his dreams, and that he should imagine that she commanded him to give her statue a golden bracelet. Myro consecrated a bracelet

to her. . . . Then the barbarians, or perhaps some sacrilegious thief——"

"Ah! it is easily seen that you are given to romancing," cried my host, lending his hand to help me down. "No, monsieur, it is a work after the School of Myro. Only look at the work, and you will agree."

Having made it a rule never to contradict pig-headed antiquarians outright, I bowed my head as though convinced, and said:

"It is a splendid piece of work."

"Ah! my God!" exclaimed M. de Peyrehorade, "here is yet another mark of vandalism! Some one has thrown a stone at my statue!"

He had just seen a white mark a little below the breast of the Venus. I noticed a similar mark on the fingers of the right hand, which at first I supposed had been scraped by the stone in passing, or perhaps a fragment of it might have broken off by the shock and rebounded upon the hand. I told my host the insult that I had witnessed and the prompt punishment which had followed. He laughed heartily, and compared the apprentice to Diomede, wishing he might see all his comrades changed into white birds, as the Greek hero did.

The breakfast bell interrupted this famous interview; and, as on the previous evening, I was

forced to eat as much as four people. Then M. de Peyrehorade's tenants came to see him, and whilst he gave them audience, his son took me to see a carriage which he had bought for his *fiancée* at Toulouse, and, of course, I admired it properly. After that I went with him to the stables, where he kept me half an hour praising his horses and telling me their pedigrees and the prizes he had won at the country races. At last he spoke of his future bride, by a sudden transition from the grey mare that he intended for her.

"We shall see her to-day. I wonder if you will think her pretty. You are so difficult to please in Paris; but everybody here and at Perpignan thinks her lovely. The best of it is she is very wealthy. Her aunt, who lived at Prades, left her all her money. Oh, I am going to be ever so happy!"

I was deeply shocked to see a young man much more affected by the dowry than by the beautiful looks of his bride-to-be.

"Are you learned in jewellery?" continued M. Alphonse. "What do you think of this ring which I am going to give her to-morrow?"

So saying, he drew from the first joint of his little finger a large ring blazing with diamonds, formed by the clasping of two hands: a most

poetic idea, I thought. It was of ancient workmanship, but I guessed that it had been retouched when the diamonds were set. Inside the ring was engraved in gothic letters: *"Sempr' ab ti"* ("Ever thine").

"It is a lovely ring," I said; but added, "the diamonds have taken from its original character somewhat."

"Oh, it is much prettier as it is now," he replied, smiling. "There are one thousand two hundred francs' worth of diamonds in it. My mother gave it me. It was an old family ring . . . from the days of chivalry. It was worn by my grandmother, who had it from her grandmother. Goodness knows when it was made!"

"The custom in Paris," I said, "is to give a very plain ring, usually made of two different metals, say, gold and platinum. For instance, the other ring which you have on that finger would be most suitable. This one is so large, with its diamonds and hands in relief, that no glove would go over it."

"Oh, Madame Alphonse can arrange that as she likes. I think she will be pleased enough to have it. Twelve hundred francs on one's finger is very pleasing. That little ring," he added, looking with a satisfied expression at the plain ring which he held in his hand, "was given me

one Shrove Tuesday by a woman in Paris, when I was staying there two years ago. Ah! that is the place to enjoy oneself in! . . ." And he sighed regretfully.

We were to dine at Puygarrig that day, at the house of the bride's parents; we drove in carriages, and were soon at the Castle, which was about a league and a half from Ille. I was introduced and received like one of the family. I will not talk of the dinner, nor of the conversation which took place, and in which I had but little part. M. Alphonse, who sat by the side of his future bride, whispered in her ear every quarter of an hour. She hardly raised her eyes, and blushed modestly every time her intended spoke to her, though she replied without embarrassment.

Mademoiselle de Puygarrig was eighteen years of age, and her lithe, delicate figure was a great contrast to the bony limbs of her sturdy lover. She was more than beautiful: she was enchanting. I admired the perfect naturalness of all her replies. Her expression was kindly, but nevertheless was not devoid of a light touch of maliciousness which reminded me, do what I would, of my host's Venus. While making this comparison to myself I wondered if the superior beauty which undoubtedly belonged to the statue

was not largely owing to her tigerish expression, for strength, even when accompanied by evil passions, always induces wonder and a sort of involuntary admiration.

What a pity, I reflected, as we left Puygarrig, that such a charming person should be so rich, and that her dowry should be the cause of her being sought by a man so unworthy of her!

Whilst on the return to Ille I found it difficult to know what to talk of to Madame de Peyrehorade, with whom I thought I ought to converse.

"You are very strong-minded people here in Roussillon," I exclaimed, "to have a wedding on a Friday. In Paris we are more superstitious; no man dare take a wife on that day."

"Oh, please don't talk of it," she said; "if it had depended only on me, I would certainly have chosen another day. But Peyrehorade wanted it, and would not give way. It troubles me, however. Suppose some misfortune should happen? There must be something in it, else why should everybody be afraid of a Friday?"

"Friday," her husband cried, "is the day dedicated to Venus. An excellent day for a wedding. You will notice, my dear colleague, that I only think of my Venus. What an

honour! It was on that account I chose Friday. To-morrow, if you are willing, we will offer her a small sacrifice before the ceremony—two ring-doves and incense, if I can find any."

"For shame, Peyrehorade!" interrupted his wife, who was scandalised in the highest degree. "Offer incense to an idol! It would be an abomination! What would be said about you through the countryside?"

"At all events," said M. de Peyrehorade, "you will let me put a wreath of roses and lilies on her head?

"'Manibus date lilia plenis.'

You see, monsieur, the charter is but a vain thing. We have no religious freedom."

The arrangements for the morrow were regulated in the following manner: Every one had to be ready and dressed for the wedding at ten o'clock prompt. After taking chocolate we were to be driven to Puygarrig. The civil marriage was to take place at the village registry, and the religious ceremony in the Castle chapel. After that there would be luncheon. Then we were to spend the time as we liked until seven o'clock, when we were all to return to M. de Peyrehorade's house, where the two families would sup together. The remainder of the time

would naturally be spent in eating as much as possible, as there would be no dancing.

Ever since eight o'clock I had sat before the Venus, pencil in hand, beginning over again for the twentieth time the head of the statue, without being able to seize the expression. M. de Peyrehorade came and went, giving me advice and repeating his Phœnician derivations. Then he placed some Bengal roses on the pedestal of the statue, and addressed to it, in a tragi-comical air, vows for the couple about to live under his roof. He went in to see about his toilette toward nine o'clock, and at the same time M. Alphonse appeared, well groomed, in a new suit, white gloves, patent-leather shoes, chased buttons and a rose in his button-hole.

" You must take my wife's portrait," he said, leaning over my drawing; " she, too, is pretty."

Then began on the tennis ground, to which I have already referred, a game which at once attracted M. Alphonse's attention. I was tired, and in despair at being unable to reproduce that diabolical face, so I soon left my drawing to watch the players. There were among them several Spanish muleteers who had come the night before. They were men from Aragon and from Navarre, almost all clever players. Although the local players were encouraged by the pres-

ence and advice of M. Alphonse, they were very soon beaten by these new champions. The patriotic onlookers were filled with concern, and M. Alphonse looked at his watch. It was still only half-past nine. His mother was not ready yet. He hesitated no longer, threw off his coat, asked for a vest, and challenged the Spaniards. I looked at him with amusement and in some surprise.

"The honour of our country must be upheld," he said.

Then I saw how very handsome he was. He was roused to passion. The toilette, which had just now filled his thoughts to the exclusion of everything else, was completely forgotten. A few minutes before he hardly dared turn his head, for fear of spoiling his cravat. Now he thought nothing of his curled hair or of his beautifully got up frilled shirt. And his *fiancée!* I really believe that, if necessary, he would have adjourned the wedding. I saw him hastily put on a pair of sandals, turn up his sleeves, and with a self-satisfied manner range himself at the head of the vanquished party, like Cæsar when he rallied his soldiers at Dyrrachium. I leapt the hedge and took up a position comfortably under the shade of a nettle tree in such a way as to be able to see both camps.

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Contrary to general expectation, M. Alphonse missed the first ball; true, it grazed the ground, and bound with surprising force near one of the players from Aragon, who seemed the head of the Spaniards.

He was a man of about forty, strong, yet spare in appearance; he stood six feet high, and his olive skin was of almost as deep a tint as the bronze of the Venus.

M. Alphonse threw his racquet on the ground in a furious rage.

"It is this cursed ring!" he cried, "which pressed into my finger and made me miss a sure thing."

With some difficulty he took off his diamond ring, and I went nearer to take it, but he forestalled me, ran to the Venus, slipped the ring on its fourth finger, and retook his position at the head of his townsmen.

He was pale, but cool and determined. From that time he made no more fouls, and the Spaniards were completely beaten. The enthusiasm of the spectators was a fine sight: some uttered shrieks of delight and threw their caps in the air: others shook hands with him and called him the pride of their countryside. If he had repulsed an invasion, I doubt if he would have received heartier or more sincere congratula-

tions. The disappointment of the vanquished added still more to the brilliance of his victory.

"We must have another match, my fine fellow," he said to the muleteer from Aragon in a condescending tone; "but I must give you odds."

I would have preferred M. Alphonse to be more modest, and I was almost sorry for his rival's humiliation.

The Spanish giant felt the insult keenly; I saw him go pale under his tanned skin. He looked miserably at his racquet and ground his teeth; then, in a choking voice he said: "Me lo pagarás." *

The voice of M. de Peyrehorade interrupted his son's triumph; my host was extremely astonished not to find him superintending the preparation of the new carriage, and was even more surprised to see him with racquet in hand, flushed from the game.

M. Alphonse ran to the house, bathed his face and hands, put on his new coat again and his patent-leather shoes, and five minutes after we were in full trot on the road to Puygarrig. All the tennis players of the town and a large crowd of spectators followed us with shouts of joy. The stout horses which drew us could hardly keep ahead of these dauntless Catalanians.

* "But you will pay for it."

We were at Puygarrig, and the procession was forming into order to walk to the registry when M. Alphonse suddenly put his hand up to his head and whispered to me:

"What a blunder! I have forgotten the ring! It is on Venus's finger, devil take her! Do not tell my mother, whatever happens. Perhaps she will not notice the omission."

"You could send some one for it," I said.

"No! my servant has stayed behind at Ille. I dare hardly trust these fellows here with twelve hundred francs worth of diamonds. What a temptation that will be to some one! Besides, what would the people here think of my absent-mindedness? They would make fun of me. They would call me the husband of the statue. . . . If only no one steals it! Fortunately, the idol frightens the young rascals. They dare not go within arm's length of her. Well, it doesn't matter, I have another ring."

The two ceremonies, civil and religious, were accomplished with suitable state. Mademoiselle de Puygarrig received the ring which had belonged to a Paris milliner, little thinking that her *fiancé* had sacrificed another's love-token to her. Then we sat down and drank, ate and sang for long enough. I was sorry the bride had to bear the coarse jollity which went on all around

her; however, she took it with a better face than I should have thought possible, and her embarrassment was neither awkward nor affected. Possibly courage springs up under occasions that need it.

The banquet broke up Lord knows when—somewhere about four o'clock. The men went for a walk in the park, which was a magnificent one, or watched the peasants of Puygarrig dance on the Castle lawn, decked in their gala dresses.

In this way we passed several hours. In the meantime the women thronged round the bride, who showed them her wedding presents. Then she changed her toilette, and I noticed that she covered up her beautiful hair with a cap and a hat with feathers in it, for wives are most particular to don as quickly as possible those adornments which custom has forbidden them to wear when they are still unmarried.

It was nearly eight o'clock when we were ready to go back to Ille. But there was a pathetic scene first between Mademoiselle de Puygarrig and her aunt, who had been a mother to her, and was of advanced age and very religious: she had not been able to go to the town with us. At her departure she gave her niece a touching sermon on her wifely duties, which re-

sulted in a flood of tears and endless embracings. M. de Peyrehorade compared this parting to the Rape of the Sabines. However, we got off at last, and during the journey every one exerted himself to cheer up the bride and make her laugh, but in vain.

At Ille supper awaited us; and *what* a supper! If the morning's coarse revel had shocked me, I was still more disgusted by the quips and jokes which circled round the bride and bridegroom. The bridegroom, who had disappeared for an instant before sitting down to supper, was pale and as chilly as an iceberg. He drank the old wine of Collioure constantly, which is almost as strong as brandy. I was on one side of him, and felt I must warn him:

"Do take care. They say this wine——"

I don't know what silly thing I said to him to show myself in harmony with the merry-makers.

"When they get up from the table I have something to say to you," he whispered, pushing my knee.

His solemn tone surprised me. I looked at him more attentively, and noticed a strange alteration in his features.

"Do you feel ill?" I asked.

"No."

And he began to drink again.

In the meantime, in the midst of cries and clapping hands, a child of eleven, who had slipped under the table, showed to the company a pretty white and rose-coloured ribbon which she had just taken from the bride's ankle. They called it her garter. It was soon cut into bits and distributed among the young people, who decorated their button-holes with it, according to a very old custom which is still preserved in a few patriarchal families. This made the bride blush to the whites of her eyes. But her confusion reached its height when M. de Peyrehorade, after calling for silence, sang some Catalanian verses to her, which he said were impromptus. I give the sense so far as I understood it.

"What is the matter with me, my friends? Has the wine I have taken made me see double? There are two Venuses here. . . ."

The bridegroom turned round suddenly and looked scared, which set everybody laughing.

"Yes," continued M. de Peyrehorade, "there are two Venuses under my roof. One I found in the earth, like a truffle; the other came down to us from the heavens to share her girdle with us."

He meant, of course, her garter.

"My son, choose between the Roman and the Catalanian Venus which you prefer. The

rascal took the Catalanian, the better part, for the Roman is black and the Catalanian is white. The Roman is cold, and the Catalanian sets on fire all who come near her."

This conclusion excited such an uproar of noisy applause and loud laughter that I thought the roof would fall on our heads. There were but three grave faces at the table—those of the wedded pair and mine. I had a splitting headache; for besides, I know not why, a marriage always makes me feel melancholy. This one disgusted me rather, too.

The last couplets were sung by the deputy-mayor, and, I may say, they were very broad; then we went into the salon to witness the departure of the bride, who would soon be conducted to her chamber, as it was nearly midnight.

M. Alphonse drew me aside into the recess of a window, and said, as he turned his eyes away from me:

"You will laugh at me . . . but I do not know what is the matter with me. . . . I am bewitched, devil take it!"

My first thought was that he fancied he was threatened with some misfortune of the nature of those referred to by Montaigne and Madame de Sévigné: "The whole realm of love is filled with tragic stories."

I thought to myself that this kind of mishap only happens to men of genius.

"You have drunk too much Collioure wine, my dear M. Alphonse," I said. "I warned you."

"That may be. But this is something much more terrible."

His voice was broken, and I thought he was quite drunk.

"You know my ring?" he continued, after a pause.

"Yes. Has it been taken?"

"No."

"Therefore you have it?"

"No—I—I could not get it off the finger of that devil of a Venus."

"Nonsense! you did not pull hard enough."

"Yes, I did. . . . But the Venus . . . has clenched her finger."

He looked at me fixedly with a haggard expression, and leant against the framework to keep himself from falling.

"What a ridiculous tale!" I said. "You pushed the ring on too far. To-morrow you must use pincers, only take care not to injure the statue."

"No, I tell you. The finger of Venus has contracted and bent up; she closed her hand, do

you hear? . . . She is my wife apparently, because I gave her my ring. . . . She will not give it back."

I shivered suddenly, and for a moment my blood ran cold. Then the deep sigh he gave sent a breath of wine into my face and all my emotion disappeared.

"The wretched man is completely drunk," I thought.

"You are an antiquarian, monsieur," the bridegroom added in dismal tones; "you know all about such statues. . . . There is perhaps some spring, some devilish catch, I do not know of. If you would go and see."

"Willingly," I said. "Come with me."

"No, I would rather you went by yourself."

So I left the salon.

The weather had changed during supper, and rain began to fall heavily. I was going to ask for an umbrella, when I stopped short and reflected. "I should be a great fool," I said to myself, "to go and verify the tale of a tipsy man! Perhaps, besides, he intended to play some stupid joke on me to amuse the country people; and at the least I should be wet through to the skin and catch a bad cold."

I cast a glance on the dripping statue from

the door, and went up to my room without returning to the salon. I went to bed, but sleep was long in coming. All the scenes that had occurred during the day returned to my mind. I thought of that beautiful, innocent young girl given up to a drunken brute. "What a detestable thing," I said to myself, "is a marriage of convenience! A mayor puts on a tricoloured sash, and a priest a stole, and behold, the noblest of girls may be dedicated to the Minotaur. What can two beings who do not love each other say at such a moment, a moment that lovers would buy at the price of life itself? Can a wife ever love a man whom she has once discovered is coarse-minded? First impressions can never be obliterated, and I am certain M. Alphonse deserves to be hated."

During my monologue, which I abridge considerably, I had heard much coming and going about the house, doors open and shut, and carriages go away: then I thought I could hear the light steps of several women upon the staircase proceeding to the end of the passage opposite my room. It was probably the procession leading the bride to bed. Then they went downstairs again, and Madame de Peyrehorade's door shut. "How unhappy and strangely ill at ease that poor girl must feel!" I said to myself. I

turned over on my bed in a bad temper. A bachelor cuts but a poor figure at a house where there is a wedding going on.

Silence had reigned for a long while, when it was interrupted by heavy steps coming up the stairs. The wooden stairs creaked loudly.

"What a clumsy lout!" I cried. "I bet he will fall down-stairs."

Then all became quiet again. I took up a book to change the current of my thoughts. It was a treatise on the Statistics of the Department, embellished with a preface by M. de Peyrehorade on the "Druidical Monuments of the Arrondissement of Prades." I fell into a doze at the third page.

I slept badly and waked several times. It must have been five in the morning, and I had been awake more than twenty minutes when the cock began to crow. Day had dawned. Then I distinctly heard the same heavy steps and the same creaking of the stairs that I had heard before I went to sleep. It struck me as very strange. I tried amidst my yawning to guess why M. Alphonse should rise so early: I could not think of any reason at all likely. I was going to close my eyes again when my attention was afresh excited by strange trampings, which were soon intermingled with the ringing of bells

and the banging of doors, and then I could distinguish confused cries.

The drunken bridegroom must have set fire to the house! And at this reflection I leapt out of bed.

I dressed rapidly and went into the corridor. From the opposite end proceeded cries and wailings, and one piercing cry sounded above all the others—"My son! my son!" Evidently some accident had happened to M. Alphonse. I ran to the bridal chamber; it was full of people. The first sight which met my eyes was the young man, half-dressed, stretched across the bed, the wood of which was broken. He was livid and motionless, and his mother wept and cried by his side. M. de Peyrehorade was busy rubbing his son's temples with eau de Cologne and holding smelling salts under his nose. Alas! his son had been dead a long time. Upon a couch at the other end of the room was the bride in the grip of terrible convulsions. She uttered inarticulate cries, and two strapping servants had the greatest difficulty in holding her down.

"My God!" I exclaimed, "what has happened?"

I went to the bedside and raised the body of the unfortunate young man; he was already cold and stiff. His clenched teeth and black face de-

noted the most frightful agony. It could be easily seen that his death had been violent and his agony terrible. There was, however, no trace of blood on his clothes. I opened his shirt and found a livid mark on his breast, which extended down his sides and back. One would have thought he had been strangled by a band of iron. My foot stumbled on something hard which was under the rug; I stooped and saw the diamond ring.

I led M. de Peyrehorade and his wife away into their room; then I had the bride carried out.

"You have a daughter left," I said to them; "you must give all your care to her." I then left them to themselves.

There seemed to me no doubt that M. Alphonse had been the victim of an assassination, and the perpetrators must have found some means to get into the bride's room during the night. Those bruises, however, on the chest and the circular direction of them puzzled me much, for neither a stick nor a bar of iron could have produced them. Suddenly I recollected to have heard that in Valence the bravoes use long leather bags full of fine sand to smother people whom they want to kill. Soon, too, I remembered the muleteer from Aragon and his threat, though I

could hardly think that he would take such a terrible vengeance on a light jest.

I went into the house and hunted all over for any traces of their having broken into the house, but I found none whatever. I went to the garden to see if the assassins had got in from there, but I could not find any sure indication. Last night's rain had, moreover, so soaked the ground that it would not have retained the clearest imprint. But I noticed, notwithstanding, several deep footmarks in the earth; they were in two contrary directions, but in the same line, beginning at the corner of the hedge next to the tennis ground and ending at the front door to the house. These might have been the footmarks made by M. Alphonse when he went to look for his ring on the statue's finger. On the other side the hedge at that spot was not so thick, and it must have been here that the murderers made their escape. Passing and repassing in front of the statue, I stopped short a second to look at it. I confess that this time I could not look at its expression of ironical wickedness without fear, and my head was so full of the ghastly scenes I had just witnessed that I seemed to be looking at an infernal divinity which gloated over the misfortunes that had fallen on the house.

I regained my room and remained there until

noon. Then I went down and asked for news of my host and hostess. They were a little calmer. Mademoiselle de Puygarrig—or rather the widow of M. Alphonse—had regained consciousness; she had even spoken to the magistrate of Perpignan, then on a tour of inspection in Ille, and this magistrate had taken down her statement. He asked me for mine. I told him what I knew, and did not conceal my suspicions regarding the muleteer from Aragon. He gave orders for his instant arrest.

"Have you learnt anything from Madame Alphonse?" I asked the magistrate, when my deposition had been taken down and signed.

"That unhappy young lady has gone mad," he said, with a sad smile; "mad, completely mad. See what she told me:

"'She had been in bed,' she said, 'for some moments with the curtains drawn, when the bedroom door opened and some one came in.' Now Madame Alphonse lay on the side of the bed, with her face turned to the wall. She did not stir, supposing it to be her husband. In a second the bed creaked as though it were burdened with an enormous weight. She was terribly frightened, but dared not turn round. Five minutes, or perhaps ten—she could not tell how long—passed. Then she made an involuntary move-

ment, or else the other person who was in the bed made one, and she felt the touch of something as cold as ice—these are her very words. She sat up in the bed, trembling in every limb. Shortly after the door opened again, and some one entered, who said: 'Good-night, my little wife,' and soon after the curtains were drawn. She heard a stifled cry. The person who was in bed by her side sat up, and seemed to stretch out its arms in front. Then she turned her head round . . . and saw, so she says, her husband on his knees by the bed, with his head as high as the pillow, in the arms of a green-looking giant who was strangling him with all its might. She said —and she repeated it to me over and over twenty times, poor lady!—she said that she recognised . . . can you guess? The bronze statue of Venus belonging to M. de Peyrehorade. . . . Since it came into the country everybody dreams of it, but I will proceed with the story of the unhappy mad girl. She lost consciousness at this sight, and probably for some time her reason. She can not in any way tell how long she remained in a faint. When she came to she saw the phantom again—or the statue, as she persists in calling it—motionless, its legs and the lower half of the body in the bed, the bust and arms stretched out before it, and between its arms her

lifeless husband. A cock crew, and then the statue got out of the bed, dropped the dead body, and went out. Madame Alphonse hung on to the bell, and you know the rest."

They brought in the Spaniard; he was calm, and defended himself with much coolness and presence of mind. He did not attempt to deny the remark I heard; he explained it by pretending that he meant nothing by it, but that on the following day, when he was more rested, he would have won a tennis match against his victor. I remember that he had added:

"A native of Aragon does not wait for his revenge till to-morrow when he is insulted. Had I thought M. Alphonse meant to insult me, I should have immediately stabbed him with my knife to the heart."

His shoes were compared with the footmarks in the garden; but his shoes were much larger than the marks.

Finally, the innkeeper with whom the man had lodged averred that he had spent the whole of that night in rubbing and doctoring one of his sick mules.

Moreover, this man from Aragon was quite noted and well known in the countryside, to which he came annually to trade. He was therefore released with many apologies.

I had forgotten the deposition of a servant who had been the last to see M. Alphonse alive. He saw him go up-stairs to his wife, and he had called the man and asked him in an anxious manner if he knew where I was. Then M. Alphonse heaved a sigh, and stood for a moment in silence, adding afterward:

"Well, the devil must have carried him off too!"

I asked this man if M. Alphonse had his diamond ring on when he spoke to him. The servant hesitated before he replied; then he said that he thought not, that at all events it had not attracted his attention. "If he had worn that ring," he added, correcting himself, "I should certainly have noticed it, because I believed that he had given it to Madame Alphonse."

Whilst I interrogated this man I felt a little of the superstitious horror that Madame Alphonse's deposition had spread throughout the house. The magistrate looked at me and smiled, and I refrained from pressing my questions any further.

A few hours after the funeral of M. Alphonse I prepared to leave Ille. M. de Peyrehorade's carriage was to take me to Perpignan. In spite of his state of feebleness the poor old man would accompany me to the gate of his

grounds. He walked to it in silence, hardly able to drag himself along even with the help of my arm. Just as we were parting I cast a last glance at the Venus. I could see plainly that my host, although he did not share the terrors and hatred that his family felt for it, would like to get rid of the object that would ever afterward remind him of a frightful disaster. I resolved to try and persuade him to put it in a museum. I was hesitating to begin the subject when M. de Peyrehorade mechanically turned his head in the direction in which he saw me looking so attentively. He saw the statue, and immediately burst into tears. I embraced him, and, without venturing to say a single word, I stepped into the carriage.

Since my departure I have never learnt that anything was discovered to throw light on this mysterious catastrophe.

M. de Peyrehorade died some months after his son. He bequeathed me his manuscripts in his will, which some day I may publish. But I have not been able to find the treatise relating to the inscriptions on the Venus.

P. S.—My friend M. de P. has just written to me from Perpignan to tell me that the statue no longer exists. After her husband's death, the

first thing Madame de Peyrehorade did was to have it melted down and made into a bell, and in this fresh form it is used in the church at Ille. But, adds M. de P., it would seem that an evil fate pursues those who possess that piece of bronze. Since that bell began to ring in Ille the vines have twice been frost-bitten.

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